

**Knowledge and Falling**  
**in Milton's *Paradise Lost***  
**and Imre Madách's *The Tragedy of Man***

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A thesis  
submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the Degree  
of  
Master of Arts by Thesis Only in English  
in the  
University of Canterbury  
by  
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University of Canterbury

2003

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## Abstract

Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Imre Madách's *Az ember tragédiája* [*The Tragedy of Man*] were written in different centuries, in different languages. Yet as reworkings of the story of the Fall of Man both attempt to explicate the phenomenon of human self-awareness. A comparison of their treatment of knowledge and its relationship to the Fall discloses this similarity of intent, as well as the fundamental difference that underlies the philosophical position of the two authors.

The thesis is divided into chapters that examine prelapsarian knowledge, the Fall itself, and postlapsarian knowledge in *Paradise Lost* and *The Tragedy of Man* respectively, with occasional reference to the Biblical story and literary analogues in order to illustrate the development of central themes. As elements of the story are considered – Adam's conversation with God in Eden, the injunction against the Tree of Knowledge, the role of Satan or Lucifer, Eve's otherness, the consequences of the Fall, expulsion from the garden, and Adam's postlapsarian [re]discovery of knowledge – it becomes clear that Milton and Madách deploy them differently to different ends: for Milton self-knowledge is only possible within the context of a relationship with God, while for Madách self-knowledge begins when man has abandoned God and, although the final stage of self-understanding can only be achieved by returning to a relationship with the divine, certain knowledge is never possible.

The comparison of *Paradise Lost* and *The Tragedy of Man* illustrates the fact that the desire to know remains a constant through the vagaries of human development, but the approach to knowledge taken by different generations shifts, drawing the story of the Fall away from its original context of religious mythology into the realms of anthropocentric philosophy.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisors, Professor David Gunby and Professor Adam Makkai of the University of Illinois at Chicago, whose enthusiasm and support made this thesis possible. Professor Makkai's assistance with obscure vocabulary and difficult constructions in translating passages from *The Tragedy of Man* was particularly invaluable. Thanks, too, to Associate Professor Chris Ackerley who offered to read the final draft and discovered those spelling errors still lurking among its lines. I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr Károly Kokas of the University of Szeged, who not only introduced me to Hungarian language and literature, but also sent me copies of Madách's work in English and Hungarian, and indefatigably hunted down, scanned, and emailed articles that would otherwise have been difficult, if not impossible, to obtain.

## Introduction

### *Know thyself* – Delphic Oracle

In Genesis, the desirability of forbidden knowledge is the catalyst that precipitates the Fall of Man. The serpent's suggestion that whoever eats the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge will become "as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3.5) effects a change in Eve's perception: considering (or reconsidering) the Tree, she sees that it is "to be desired to make one wise" (Gen. 3.6). Whether or not Adam also finds the fruit and its properties desirable is left to the reader's imagination. That he succumbs to temptation is summarily expressed in the words "and he did eat," but the object and means of seduction are not identified, leaving subsequent tradition free to represent Eve as temptress and Adam's fall not as a thirst for forbidden knowledge but as a fatal lapse into uxorious weakness that overcomes his better judgement. Tradition generally represents Adam as impervious to the appeal of illicit knowledge. In the sixth century account of the Fall by Alcimus Ecdicius Avitus the serpent approaches Eve because he fears "he could not seduce the man / From the firm resolution of his mind" (10-11).<sup>1</sup> Similarly, in *Adamus Exul* (1601) and *Adamo Caduto* (1647) Adam eats the fruit in full realisation of what he does, compelled not by a thirst for knowledge but rather by his love of Eve.

Despite discriminating between these two sources of temptation, knowledge and love, as appropriate to Eve and Adam respectively, the literary tradition that preserves and develops the story of the Fall maintains the centrality of the symbol of the Tree of Knowledge. In the Biblical account, the Tree is situated in the midst of the garden, and knowledge is likewise centrally located in the story of the Fall. Understanding the relationship between knowledge and falling in any given version of the story is critical to an appreciation of its underlying philosophical intent, and a comparison between versions illustrates the way in which the story is utilised to explore the phenomenon of the human capacity for knowing. For the purposes of this thesis, I have chosen to compare the relationship between knowledge and falling in Milton's *Paradise Lost* with a version of the Fall story comparatively unfamiliar to English readers, Imre Madách's 19<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian dramatic poem, *Az ember tragédiája* [*The Tragedy of Man*]. While Milton's

reinterpretation of the relationship between knowledge and the Fall as far as Adam is concerned has received significant critical attention, *The Tragedy of Man* has not, in general, been approached as a revision of the Fall story. Yet here the interconnection between knowledge and falling receives another twist, one that takes it further from the original Biblical source and aligns it with contemporary philosophical thought, challenging the assumption that underlies Milton's epistemology, that man can only know himself within the context of a relationship with God.

The choice of Madách's *The Tragedy of Man* as a companion work and point of contrast to *Paradise Lost* may well give rise to questions among students of Hungarian literature as well as among Miltonists. The two works were written in different centuries and different languages, after all, and little scholarship has attempted to link them. In an article that explores literary precursors for Madách's Adam, Károly Horváth enumerates those details of *The Tragedy* that suggest Madách's familiarity with *Paradise Lost*, but more frequently critics have identified the poem as an example of the Romantic *poème d'humanité*, or analysed it in terms of its Faustian influences or the Hegelian dialectic evident in the structure of the dream sequence. Others have approached it by means of discussing its broad philosophical message.<sup>2</sup> Given that criticism has by and large avoided the comparison between Milton and Madách, it is reasonable to ask, why examine that comparison now? Why read *The Tragedy* as a reworking of the story of the Fall of Man and in connection with *Paradise Lost*?

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<sup>1</sup> All references to versions of the Fall story antecedent to *Paradise Lost* are drawn from Watson Kirkconnell's *The Celestial Cycle*; reference is given by page number rather than line.

<sup>2</sup> Károly Horváth. "Ádám alakjának világirodalmi előzményeihez." For the Faustian influence see Léser; Lotze also looks at parallels between *The Tragedy* and Lessing's fragments of a Faust drama. Sőtér points out that although Goethe's *Faust* and *The Tragedy* ask some similar questions, the answers they give are very different, and many of the similarities between the two works are merely external and incidental: "Helyesen akkor járunk el, ha leszögezzük, hogy Madách nemcsak formailag, de eszmeileg is ugyanúgy indítja a Tragédiát, mint Goethe a *Faustot*, – majd pedig csupán formailag hasonló, de lényegileg nagyon is eltérő végkifejlettel zárja" (180) [We proceed correctly, if we posit that not merely in terms of form but also ideologically Madách opens *The Tragedy* as Goethe does *Faust*. He closes it, however, with a denouement that is merely formally similar but in terms of substance is very different.] The Hegelian dialectic is treated in depth by Lotze (74-104). Of those critics who deal with the underlying philosophical message of *The Tragedy*, Lengyel offers the most compelling analysis in his article "A filozófia alapproblémája 'Az ember tragédiája'-ban."

The answer lies in Madách's choice of Adam as the protagonist for his dramatic poem. In 1852, in the wake of Hungary's failed revolution against the Hapsburg empire, Madách was imprisoned for sheltering a political fugitive. Detained for close to a year, he read and reread Goethe's *Faust* (Lesér 44) and his familiarity with that work is evident in *The Tragedy*; at many levels implicitly and explicitly the text refers to *Faust*. That he subsequently chose not Faust but Adam as the hero through which to explore the individual's approach to the problems of existence suggests that his aims are consciously different to Goethe's. In Adam and the story of the Fall, Madách discovered an element of character and subject matter not available to him through the story of Faust. MacCallum, discussing Milton's choice of Adam as the hero of his epic, observes that "Adam's experience contains the experience of mankind" (*Sons* 165). Hubay, discussing Madách's use of Adam, goes one step further: not only does Adam's experience encapsulate the experience of all mankind, but, as the first father of humanity, Adam contains in himself the entire human race. If the human race is able to produce autocracy and democracy, Epicureanism and Christianity, orthodoxy and revolution, then all this must have been present as potential in Adam (1176). Yet despite this – or perhaps, paradoxically, because of it – Adam remains an individual, the individual, in a way that Faust cannot. Faust is not Everyman, the representative of the human race, but is atypical in his striving for knowledge of a kind that those around him cannot appreciate. This fundamental difference between Faust and Adam is made dramatically clear in the fluidity, or lack of fluidity, with which the two characters enter and inhabit the various worlds they encounter. Adam, flexible and multifaceted as the entire human race *in nucleo*, is transformed from Pharaoh to Miltiades, from Kepler to Danton, while remaining simultaneously himself. Passing from scene to scene, he does not lose himself; his identity as Adam is not fractured by his assuming the identity of Tancred or Sergiolus. Rather, these personalities seem to grow organically from his personality and quest for knowledge as Adam. He is able to enter the scenes of the dream-sequence without causing disruption or discontinuance, and his revision of the ideal affects not the society in which he finds himself but only his developing ego.<sup>3</sup> Even in London, the Phalanstery, and the Ice World, where he appears

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<sup>3</sup> Lotze, identifying in Adam Hegel's "World-Historical Individual" whose "effort and ...passion bring[s]about progress," implies that Adam's revision of the ideal does have an impact upon society: in the Paris scene "Adam is seen...for the last time as actively determining human history" (82) While it is undeniable that Adam responds to the corruption of the ideal in its historical realisation, his revision of the

without the disguise of an assumed character, his actions do not cause change within society. Rather, he is assimilated by that society and its inhabitants interpret his presence according to their own rules. In contrast, Faust remains Faust and his intrusion into different locales and historical or dramatic moments is disruptive and destructive. Rather than being assimilated by the reality that he enters, his entry threatens that reality.

In Adam, then, Madách found a character whom he could treat dramatically and symbolically as an individual, while representing in him mankind's response – and his own personal response – to issues of history and self-determination. Adam's integrity as a dramatic persona is not undermined by his function as a symbol of the developing individual. A second reason motivating his choice of Adam over Faust is that the story of the Fall is aetiological, attempting to explain the human condition by rationalising our ability to conceive of an ideal of perfection within ourselves and our simultaneous inability to achieve that ideal as the result of the loss of an original perfection. While Milton's use of the Fall story stemmed from a desire to compose a literary masterpiece based on history that would be "doctrinal and exemplary to a nation" and "to Gods glory, by the honour and instruction of my country" (*Works* I 810), Madách wrote his masterpiece during a period of withdrawal and intense reflection, with no avowed didactic aims. His interest in history had already been established in his earlier dramas; now, by returning to the beginning of human history, he attempts to put into perspective the political and personal inability to achieve ideals that had driven him into seclusion.<sup>4</sup> The Faust story, with its impetus for dramatic action based on the Book of Job rather than

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ideal, if judged in terms of bringing about progress, is a signal failure. It could be argued that his rejection of the ideal catapults the drama forward to the next scene, but this would be to forget Lucifer's role as orchestrator of the entire dream sequence. It is not Adam but Lucifer who carries the dreamer to the next scene, and invariably Adam arrives at an epoch where the revision of the ideal has already been corrupted.

<sup>4</sup> Madách's interest in drama saw several plays completed before *The Tragedy: Commodus* (1839), *Nápolyi Endre* [Andrew of Naples] (1840-41), *Csák végnapjai* [Csák's Last Days] (1841-42), *Férfi és nő* [Man and Woman] (1842-43), *Csak tréfa* [Just a joke] (1843-44), *Mária királynő* [Queen Mary] (1843, revised 1855), and *A civilizátor* [The Civilisator] (1859). Many of these are of an overtly historical nature. *Férfi és nő*, a reinterpretation of *The Trachinian Women* of Sophocles, illustrates Madách's interest in the relationship between man and woman, an interest also evident in his shorter poetry (Lotze 39-42). "Az első halott" [The First Man Dead] and "A nő teremtese" [The Creation of Woman] both deal with themes Madách comes back to in greater depth in *The Tragedy of Man*.



Genesis, could not have offered him this perspective nor the means to develop the philosophy of life that informs *The Tragedy*.

These two facts, the flexibility of Adam as both individual and Everyman, and the Fall as a starting point from which to understand the human experience, offer strong inducement to explore *The Tragedy* as a late revision of the Fall story. Yet the initial question remains: why compare Madách's work with Milton's, and, more specifically, why compare their treatment of self-knowledge and falling? That Madách knew *Paradise Lost* is generally accepted; he had access to Milton's epic in German or French translation or in Sándor Bessenyei's Hungarian prose editions of 1796 and 1817 (Horvath 52). But direct influence is not necessarily a prerequisite for comparison. In his article, "Godgames in Paradise: Educational Strategies in Milton and Fowles," Martin Kuester discusses the phenomenon of intertextuality generated by the act of reading two literary works that might otherwise be unrelated. Such intertextuality can "result in a revaluation of literary tradition, in an interpretation seeing older texts in new perspectives and integrating them into new textual genealogies in which they had never been seen before" (31). While it is not my intention to argue such a radical retroactive intertextuality between *The Tragedy of Man* and *Paradise Lost*, the process of comparison, which approaches the earlier work through the later one as well as the other way around, may shed new light on textual intent or literary effect in *Paradise Lost*. For instance, the fact that Madách's Adam does not and cannot speak with God until the final Scene of *The Tragedy of Man* throws into focus the significance of Adam's conversation with God in Book VIII of *Paradise Lost* and its centrality to his growth in self-knowledge. The silent presence of death throughout *The Tragedy* as a catalyst to Adam's desire for knowledge likewise serves to highlight the necessity of his understanding death after the Fall in *Paradise Lost*.

A comparison of the two works discovers a wealth of such subtleties in the treatment of the theme of knowledge. The chapters that follow identify the most critical of these. Unfortunately, the scope of the thesis does not allow for a similarly detailed exploration of Eve's growing self-knowledge but only for a few comments on how her otherness affects Adam's understanding of himself. The difference in the structure of the two works – three quarters of *Paradise Lost* narrates events before the Fall, while in *The Tragedy* Adam has fallen already by the end of Scene 2 – necessitates a slight imbalance in the amount of space allocated to prelapsarian knowledge in *Paradise Lost*. There is not much to say about knowledge before the Fall in *The Tragedy* simply because in this

instinctual state Madách's Adam does not know. What becomes clear as the comparison proceeds is that one of the fundamental differences between the philosophical positions of Milton and Madách is that for the former the Fall represents a failure in self-knowledge, while for the latter, self-knowledge only becomes possible through the Fall.

## Chapter 1

### Prelapsarian knowledge: the Education of Adam and the Delineation of Choice

Narrating the story of creation in *Paradise Lost*, the archangel Raphael asserts that man was made “self-knowing” (VII 510). Certainly when Adam is first introduced to the reader in Book IV, he possesses a confident and well-reasoned knowledge of himself and of God. He understands the process of his own creation (God “made us...raised us from the dust” IV 416) and can extrapolate the goodness of the creator from the physical conditions of his own existence. In this first speech to Eve, he identifies not only God’s creative power and goodness (“needs must the Power / That made us, and for us this ample World / Be infinitely good” 412-14), but also man’s dependency on that power and goodness that “plac’t us here / In all this happiness, who at his hand / Have nothing merited” (416-18), as well as his inability to recompense his Creator by paying off his debt of gratitude (“nor can perform / Aught whereof hee hath need” 418-20). The Adam of Book IV is aware of God’s injunction against eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge and of the reasoning behind that injunction: he understands that the Tree is “The only sign of our obedience left / Among so many signs of power and rule / Conferr’d upon us” (428-30). He recognises the responsibility he and Eve bear within the context of the created world and expresses this in a summary that mirrors the Westminster Catechism’s identification of the “chief end of man.” Adam’s “But let us ever praise him, and extol / His bounty, following our delightful task / To prune these growing Plants, and tend these Flow’rs” (436-38) offers a kind of Edenic parallel to the glorification and enjoyment of God enjoined in the fourth question and answer of the Catechism. Adam and Eve are to extol (glorify) God, following their delightful task of tending Eden (enjoying God forever).

When we first meet him in Book IV, then, Adam is possessed of a significant knowledge of himself, of God, of the created world, and of the interrelation of these as expressed in and expressive of God’s goodness and man’s responsibility. Only as we continue to read *Paradise Lost* are the processes that have contributed to his apparently adequate knowledge unravelled and it becomes clear how he arrived at this state of knowledge. The angel Raphael was notably absent from creation and heard the story

second-hand from his celestial companions: the self-knowledge he finds in Adam, although present as potential in newly-created man, is in fact learnt rather than instinctive. Adam is in tutelage and has been since the moment of his creation; his tutor is a God who not only supplies necessary information about the world in which Adam finds himself but prompts him to explore the nature of his own existence. In this sense the structure of *Paradise Lost* presents the undoing of knowledge, moving backwards through narrative time from an Adam whose understanding seems sufficient, to an Adam who, newly created, lacks all concrete knowledge of himself, the world and God.

The possibility of knowledge in the prelapsarian state is of central importance to Milton's reworking of the Fall story. The Biblical account of the creation of man comprises only narrative: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed" (Gen 2.8-9). The basic elements of the creation as narrated in Books VII and VIII of *Paradise Lost* are derived from the Genesis text – the formation of Adam from the "dust of the ground" (VII 524-5), his inspiration with "the breath of life" (VII 525-26) through which he becomes a "living soul" (VII 528), and his placement in Eden (VIII 300-306) – but the Biblical narrative does not explore the impact of creation upon the "living soul." Adam asks no questions about his own existence or that of the creator and consequently no growth in knowledge is explicit within the narrative. What knowledge he possesses is inherent, not learnt, and his education at the hands of God is conducted not as colloquy but as instruction and observation: God delivers the injunction against the Tree of Knowledge and, remarking that it is not good for Adam to be alone, announces that he will make "an help meet for him" (Gen. 2.18). Adam's naming of the animals almost has a ring of whimsy about it. God brings the animals "unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof," a process that seems at best serendipitous if not downright chancy.

Several points of difference between Genesis and *Paradise Lost* are immediately noticeable and all relate to the importance Milton attaches to Adam's self-knowledge and his developing understanding of his Creator and the created world. When Adam wakes after his creation, he finds himself faced with problems arising from the fact of his existence. He has no knowledge of "who I was, or where, or from what cause" (VIII 270-71) but within moments of articulating his bewilderment at finding himself alive he intuitively

that his existence cannot be the result of itself, that life cannot be self-created, and must therefore be evidence of “some great Maker.” His continued questioning reveals his recognition of his reciprocal duty to praise the one who permitted him this initial self-awareness, “Tell me, how may I know him, how adore, / From whom I have that thus I move and live, / And feel that I am happier than I know” (280-82). Knowledge of the self can only be approached through knowledge of God and, conversely, knowledge of the self leads to a more perfect knowledge of God.<sup>1</sup> The two are inextricable. In the moment of his nativity, it is Adam’s awareness of his self-existence, his sense that he is happy and that he moves and lives, that leads him to postulate the existence of a Creator.

Having reached this first stage in knowledge, Adam is conveyed in a dream to the Garden of Eden. There the voice that addressed him in sleep takes shape as “Whom thou sought’st,” the great Maker who will continue the process of “creation” as he engages in conversation with the man he has made. In Genesis the first words of God to man comprise the injunction: “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2.16-17). Significantly, Milton’s God prefaces his first speech to Adam with words of self-identification and the gifting of Eden, spelling out in dialogue the narrative of Genesis 2.15. His opening words contain an affirmation of his being as “Author of all this thou seest” and continue with the presentation of Paradise to man and the invitation to “eat freely with glad heart; fear here no dearth” (VIII 317, 322). The first concern of Milton’s God is to assure Adam of the goodness of creation and the Creator. Further, when he forbids Adam to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, he explains that the tree stands as a “Pledge of thy Obedience,” privileging Adam with information that the Biblical Jehovah did not feel obliged to disclose. The

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<sup>1</sup> Milton implies this interrelationship in *Of Education*: “The end then of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection” (*Works* II 366-67). Imitation implies not only an understanding of the object to be imitated but the necessity of a self-knowledge that enables one to recognise when one’s behaviour corresponds to the desired model. Conversely, regaining to know God aright begins by a process of self-realisation and perfection, “possessing our souls of true virtue.” Compare Calvin: “No man can survey himself without forthwith turning his thoughts towards the God in whom he lives and moves; because it is perfectly obvious, that the endowments which we possess cannot possibly be from ourselves; nay that our very being is nothing else than subsistence in God alone” (*Institutes* I 37).

consequences of transgression are also more clearly delineated: Adam will die, becoming mortal, and will be expelled from “this happy State” into “a World / Of woe and sorrow” (VIII 331, 332-33).

In the Genesis account the prohibition is followed immediately by God’s observation that it is not good for man to be alone, and the naming of the animals follows as a logical consequence from this. There is no opportunity for Adam to respond to the prohibition. Milton’s rearrangement allows Adam to reflect upon the “rigid interdiction” and assert his choice to remain obedient and not incur the consequences of sin. But the prohibition and the identification of a knowledge that is forbidden represent only one element in Adam’s education. The focus of the text is the positive progression in knowledge, and God’s reaffirmation of Adam’s dominance over the created world offers reassurance of his “gracious purpose” after the severity of the prohibition and its consequences.

In Adam’s response to the created world, the concept of “calling” found in the Genesis text is replaced by the significantly different verb “to name,” one that suggests not only the random attachment of appellation to object but the recognition of qualities already expressed in some [as yet unuttered] nomination. Adam’s naming of the animals as they present themselves to him in Eden involves an understanding of the intrinsic nature of the created object: “I nam’d them, as they pass’d, and understood / Their Nature, with such knowledge God endu’d / My sudden apprehension” (352-54). He has progressed from the instinctive grasp of creation that enabled him to postulate a “great Maker” to a deeper understanding of the reality that underlies the physical appearance of created things. His understanding touches now upon inner truth rather than external appearance: he understands “their Nature” rather than simply what he “saw.” The verbs of perception that had characterised his discourse in the moments after his awakening before his transportation to Eden – “found,” “gaz’d,” “saw,” “perus’d,” “survey’d,” “beheld” – were all oriented towards the external. In the lacuna between his creation and his transportation to Eden, he could not perceive what lay beneath external reality and used the verb *to know* without exception as a negative measure of understanding, either as a simple expression of the absence of knowledge (“But who I was, or where, or from what cause, / Knew not” 270-71; “stray’d I knew not wither” 283), as a desire to remedy the absence of knowledge (“how may I know him” 280), or as an uneasy awareness of the inaccessibility of self-knowledge (“feel that I am happier than I know” 282). It is not until God has instructed

him to “know” (328) and “understand” (345), that the verbs of external perception that characterised Adam’s discourse outside Eden are replaced by verbs expressive of deeper perception. His “sudden apprehension” is enabled by God and he is endued with “knowledge” that has become a positive rather than a negative measure of understanding – “I...understood / Their Nature” (353). Having moved from physical appearance to inner reality, Adam is now able to return to the deeper questions of existence equipped with knowledge and understanding: his next speech reveals his realisation that the nature of God is beyond his full comprehension and therefore he cannot “name” God, and that although God has no need for companionship, man does.

Here, too, Milton’s account diverges from the Biblical text. In Genesis it is not Adam (at this stage still relegated to the status of grammatical object) who recognises his need for a “help meet,” but God. In *Paradise Lost* Adam’s recognition of his need for companionship is indicative of his reaching a higher level of self-knowledge, a level at which he can revise previous conclusions: he is, he says, no longer “happier than I know” but has become aware of a lack within him that precludes happiness: “In solitude / What happiness, who can enjoy alone, / Or all enjoying, what contentment find?” (364-6).<sup>2</sup> Whereas Adam’s initial postulation of a divine Creator was the result of intuition, now his recognition of a lack within himself and the need for companionship demonstrates a newly-discovered faculty of deductive logic. Having seen and named the birds and beasts as they approached him “two and two,” Adam identifies a lack of “two-and-two-ness” within himself and realises that he is lonely.<sup>3</sup> Again, this new pitch of self-knowledge is reached only under tutelage to the divine: the task of naming the animals provides him with the opportunity to discover and articulate his need for companionship. That God intends the exercise as a catalyst towards self-knowledge is evident in his response to Adam’s expression of his need: “The vision bright, / As with a smile more bright’n’d” (368).

God’s tutelage of Adam through the ensuing discussion parallels the systematic education Milton sets forth in *A Tractate of Education*, a method designed to “trie all their

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<sup>2</sup> Kietzman overlooks Adam’s progress in knowledge through the colloquy with God when she writes, “God applauds Adam’s desire for a partner in conversation as a sign that he *intuitively* knows himself and is able to express ‘the spirit within (him) free’ (55, my italics)

<sup>3</sup> In Giambattista Andreini’s *L’Adamo* it is not until Act II Scene 2 and after the creation of Eve that Adam calls the animals to him and gives them names.

peculiar gifts of nature, and if there were any secret excellence among them, [to] fetch it out, and give it fair opportunities to advance it selfe by” (*Works* II 413). God’s assertion that the earth is full of living creatures with which Adam can “find pastime” is designed as a “trial” to encourage Adam to formulate more exactly the need he feels within himself. In his response, Adam evinces further growth in knowledge, not only recognising in himself a need for more than simply “pastime” but identifying precisely what qualities define the fellowship he seeks; namely, equality and participation in “all rational delight” (VIII 391). Not only has he gleaned the necessity of partnership from naming the birds and beasts but now, prompted by God’s apparent indifference to his plight, he articulates his realisation that their nature is other than his own, not participating in “rational delight” but fitting them only to live with partners of their own kind. His use of “rational” in itself illustrates his deepening understanding of his own nature, marking an advanced stage of a self-awareness that began in “quick instinctive motion.” Further, Adam’s basing his argument upon the inferiority of the animals demonstrates his capacity to recollect and utilise for his own purpose information supplied by external sources: when God brought the animals for naming, he stressed their “low subjection” and now Adam relies on this to support his request for an equal.

Again, the Almighty is “not displeas’d.” Having prompted Adam to identify the critical difference between his own nature and that of the animals, he now prompts him to identify the difference between the nature of man and God. A solitary state, he suggests, does not necessarily preclude happiness. Again it is a “trial” and one that Adam meets successfully, expressing his appreciation of God’s immeasurable majesty and the inability of man to comprehend him fully:

To attain  
The heighth and depth of thy Eternal ways  
All human thoughts come short, Supreme of things;  
Thou in thyself art perfect, and in thee  
Is no deficiencie found (412-16).

Having acknowledged God’s otherness, Adam returns to his argument, recognising that it is not negated by God’s comparison with his own solitary happiness, for the nature of man is other than the nature of God and the two cannot be compared. Specifically, God has no need to propagate, being perfect in his singularity, while man, who lacks the creative powers that enable God to “raise thy Creature to what heighth thou wilt / Of Union or



Communion, deifi'd" (430-31), yet desires to "beget / like of his like" (423-24). Adam's identification of his inability by conversing similarly to "deify" the animals of Eden and "erect [them] / From prone" (432-33) contains within it a summary of the process by which God has, from the moment of Adam's creation and more particularly throughout the conversation, drawn him erect, as it were, from his original instinctive state to a fullness of knowledge that enables him to engage in rational discussion with the highest of all beings, God himself.

At this point God expresses satisfaction with Adam's progress and with the pitch of self-knowledge reached:

Thus far to try thee, Adam, I was pleas'd,  
And find thee knowing not of Beasts alone,  
Which thou hast rightly nam'd, but of thyself,  
Expressing well the spirit within thee free,  
My Image...

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I, ere thou spak'st,  
Knew it not good for Man to be alone,  
And no such company as then thou saw'st,  
Intended thee, for trial only brought,  
To see how thou could'st judge of fit and meet (VIII 437-48).

Adam has reached that state of well-reasoned knowledge in which we find him at the beginning of Book IV, understanding himself and God, and able to explain the relationship between God's goodness and man's responsibility. It is knowledge he has reached through interaction with his divine tutor, but from this point in dramatic time God retires from direct involvement in Eden, leaving Adam to continue his discovery of self with the "fit help" of his "other self," Eve, who moves his education away from a reasoned appreciation of God's goodness and man's responsibility towards an understanding of the importance of human relationships. However, by presenting the creation and education of Adam as an event recollected at a later point in narrative time, the structure of *Paradise Lost* enables the juxtaposition of Adam's perfected understanding of himself and his struggles with the paradox of otherness. His progress in self-knowledge and God's satisfaction with his understanding of "the spirit within" him are followed within a

hundred lines by his bewilderment at the nature of Eve, a bewilderment that will ultimately constitute a failure in self-knowledge as he decides to fall.

It is in the prelapsarian state that the first significant difference between Milton's account of the Fall and Madách's can be identified. In his treatment of Adam's awakening consciousness, his transportation to Eden, God's delivery of the injunction, Adam's naming of the animals, and his request for a companion, Milton's concern is to illustrate Adam's growth in knowledge through his tutelage at the hands of his Creator. But the visibility of the divine and the divine concern in Adam's education in *Paradise Lost* are superseded by the invisibility of the divine in *The Tragedy of Man*. Having created the world and seen the "great ideal" incarnate, Madách's God sits back and ostensibly leaves the machine of creation to itself.<sup>4</sup> God no longer walks with man or visits him in "divine shape" in dreams. In *Paradise Lost* Adam asks questions arising from his own existence and God assists him to discover satisfactory answers. In *The Tragedy of Man* neither Adam nor God formulates the essential questions of being. God addresses Adam anonymously and at first glance it does not appear that his intention is to prompt Adam to question the mystery of existence or to stimulate his pursuit of knowledge. Rather, he speaks only in order to deliver the injunction against the Tree of Knowledge.<sup>5</sup> In doing so,

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<sup>4</sup> It is worth observing that the lines "A gép forog, az alkotó pihen. / Évmilliókig eljár tengelyén / Mig egy kerékfogát újítani kell" (13-16) [The engine turns, the maker rests. / For aeons it will turn about its axle / Before one cog will need to be replaced] is János Arany's alteration of Madách's original "S úgy össze vág minden, hogy azt hiszem / Évmilliókig szépen el forog / Mig egy kerékfogát újítani kell" [And all dovetails so neatly, I think that / it will tick along for aeons / before one cog will need to be replaced]. The original image suggests that God views creation as a clock, wound up and ticking – the verb "elforog" [az idő] implies the passage of time, an image that carries subtly different connotations to the more explicit "a gép forog" [the engine turns]. Similarly, only in Arany's alteration does God identifies himself as the alkotó [maker] and only in Arany's version does God, having completed the work of creation, sit back and take a break.

<sup>5</sup> Hubay speaks of *The Tragedy's* "mítoszi kezdet[e] (a Bibliából jól ismert eseményekkel)" (1776) [mythological beginning (with events familiar from the Bible)] but fails to note that beneath the veneer of familiarity the traditional material used by Madách is put through significant revision (cf Horvath 52). The response of the heavenly chorus to the completed work of creation is reminiscent of *Paradise Lost* VIII 602-32 rather than the Genesis account, where no mention is made of angelic hymns. Lucifer's silence, causing an interruption in the songs of praise, and his indictment of Creation again lack Biblical sources, and in terms of the Fall, the tempter appears not as a serpent but as a man, and claims rightful ownership not only

he follows the traditional formula of the Biblical story, prefacing his command with a reminder that beyond this one prohibition he has generously set an entire world (or garden) at Adam's disposal. The details of the injunction, however, depart from tradition, and it is in these deviations that one can begin to identify the purpose of Madách's revision of the Fall story and, specifically, God's involvement in the education of Adam.

In the first place, Madách's God forbids Adam access not only to the Tree of Knowledge but also to the Tree of Life. Traditionally only the Tree of Knowledge is forbidden, while the Tree of Life is relegated to a position of uncertain significance. In *Paradise Lost* it provides a place for Satan to perch as a cormorant "devising Death" (IV 194-98) but despite its centrality in the garden, Adam does not think to eat its fruit and so avert the unknown death whose nature and meaning he agonises over after the Fall. In Book XII, following the Genesis story, an angel with a flaming sword prevents access to the tree; his intention is not only to create a barrier between fallen humanity and the possibility of eternal life (XI 93-95) but also to prevent "foul spirits" stealing the fruit and practising further delusions upon man (XI 122-25). Among the notable antecedents to Milton, in *La Seconde Semaine* du Bartas ascribes to the Tree of Life a peaceable quality that would keep man from insurrections, civil strife, grief and "the passage of twice-childish age" (64). The author of the Junius manuscript suggests that the two trees were planted to give man a choice; in choosing to eat of the Tree of Life he would have lived "in the world of life eternal," free from the irksome reality of age and illness (31). In *Adamo Caduto* God encourages Adam and Eve to eat the fruit of the Tree of Life and not only to eat it, but eat it on a regular basis:

Yet wilt thou never die  
(Weary and bent with age, with ancient flanks  
Trembling, and every power failing quite)  
If of the Tree of Life thou still shalt eat (229).

Traditionally, then, the Tree of Life is either implicitly beneficial to mankind or, as in *Adamo Caduto*, explicitly beneficial, with the eating of its fruit actually enjoined by the Creator. In *The Tragedy of Man* Adam is warned away from the Tree of Life. It is no

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of the Tree of Knowledge (an advance on the Genesis serpent) but also the Tree of Life. Eve is not tempted first, afterward to tempt her husband in turn, but both are tempted and fall together.

longer beneficial to mankind and, paradoxically, carries the same penalty of death as does the Tree of Knowledge.

The second difference explains this inversion of the traditional role of the Tree of Life: together with the Tree of Knowledge, it has become the property of Lucifer, to whom God gives both trees, after cursing them, at the end of Scene 1. While Milton's Eden is fenced about and watched over by angelic troops whose task is to deny Satan access to Paradise, Madách's God, in a radical reworking of the story, not only allows Lucifer access to Paradise but places him in the midst of his created world, gifting him the two trees that stand in the centre of the garden and defining a sphere within Eden to which Lucifer now has legal claim. God's motivation for warning Adam away from the trees is thus very different from his motivation in *Paradise Lost*. The trees no longer constitute a "memorial of obedience" but Adam is to avoid them because a "más szellem" is guarding their tempting fruits. Translated as "alien spirit" by Mark, Szirtes and McLeod, "más szellem" simply means a different spirit, one who is "other." While "alien" carries this connotation of otherness, it also suggests a repugnant or even sinister nature that is not necessarily present in the Hungarian.<sup>6</sup> Despite Lucifer's intentions to ruin Adam and Eve and "subvert [the] whole created world" (150-51),<sup>7</sup> God does not refer to him as a "rossz szellem," an "evil spirit," but only as a "más szellem," a designation that is not burdened with the connotations carried by the English "alien," and does not in itself bode evil but rather identifies Lucifer as one who is different. The prohibition thus reads:

Stop, stop! I gave you the whole world, Adam.  
 Avoid only these two trees;  
 A different spirit watches over their tempting fruit,  
 And he who tastes it will surely die (162-65).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The adjective "más" can be applied to anything or anyone who is dissimilar to oneself or to the object of comparison. The colloquial "más majom," used of someone one wishes to distance oneself from, means literally "a different [kind of] ape," while the equivalent of the English "that's a different kettle of fish" is found in the Hungarian phrase "más káposzta" – "different cabbage."

<sup>7</sup> All translations from Hungarian are my own. Passages from *The Tragedy* are identified by reference to line number in the 1998 Raabe Klett Kiadó edition.

<sup>8</sup> Compare Mark's translation:

Beware, Adam, beware. To you I gave  
 the whole earth, but these two trees, these I ban.  
 Over them an alien spirit sits watch,

In these lines, then, two striking revisions of the traditional Fall story are found: the Tree of Life no longer occupies a place of nebulous significance at the centre of the garden of Eden but is clearly associated with the Tree of Knowledge as a tree to avoid, and Lucifer, the guardian of these two trees, is identified by God as a different spirit and the reason why Adam should avoid them. Continuing, God offers Adam an alternative, drawing his attention away from the trees to the grapes that hang ripe in the shade:

Over there clustered grapes glint red,  
There soft shadow offers tranquillity  
In the sultry heat of dazzling noon (166-68).

Again, God's presentation of an alternative is without precedent in antecedent versions of the Fall. In *Paradise Lost* God concludes the "rigid interdiction" and pauses a while before, "his clear aspect / Return'd" (336-37), he reminds Adam of his dominion over the earth and brings the animals before him to be named. While this reminder provides reassurance of God's "gracious purpose," in no way does it mitigate the severity of the consequences of the injunction, and its function is not to offer an alternative but, as has

And he that tastes their fruit swallows his death (2).

Also Szirtes:

Beware, beware! The whole wide world is yours  
But those two trees you must shun.  
An alien spirit guards their tender fruit,  
And those who taste it find their life undone (30).

And McLeod:

Adam, I've given all the world to you,  
but those accursed trees you must avoid.  
An alien spirit tends their fruit to tempt you:  
whoever tastes of them, shall taste death also (9).

The original reads:

Megállj, megállj, egész földet neked  
Ádám, csak e két fát kerüld, kerüld,  
Más szellem óvja csábgyümölcsseit,  
S halállal hal meg, aki élvezi (162-65).

It is surprising that only McLeod utilises the potential pun in "csábgyümölcs." The two parts of the compound word, *csáb* and *gyümölcs*, means respectively "allurement, enticement" and "fruit." Perhaps the most literal translation would be "their come-hither fruit."

already been noted, to prompt the next stage of Adam's developing self-knowledge by illustrating the need of the creature for a mate.

Taking all three differences into account, it becomes clear that the injunction in *The Tragedy* more properly constitutes the presentation of a choice than in any previous version of the Fall. God does not forbid Adam to eat the fruit but warns him away from it: "e két fát kerüld, kerüld" is an imperative to shun or avoid the two trees, not a strict injunction against the eating of their fruits. Although he spells out the consequences of death that will result should Adam choose to enjoy the fruit, nowhere in Scene 2 does he actually forbid the eating but only warns man to beware: "Ember, vigyázz!" (271) [Man, beware!]. Rather, in this speech God is delineating for Adam the conditions of choice. He identifies what has been given to man (the whole world) and what has not (these two trees). He identifies the guardian of the two trees as "different" and offers Adam an alternative, the grapes that hang ripe in the shade, presenting him with a choice between the status quo and an alternative. In the first instance, Adam chooses the status quo, deciding to follow the bidding of the voice. Later, in eating, he chooses the alternative, rejecting the conditions of innocence and instinctive life in Eden. But in the absence of a specific command not to eat, his actions do not properly comprise sin. God does not damn him or drive him from Eden but only abandons him to himself with the words, "Ádám, Ádám! Elhagytál engemet, / Élhagylak én is, lásd, mit érsz magadban!" (334-35) [Adam, Adam, you have abandoned me / I abandon you too; see what you can achieve on your own], and Adam leaves Eden of his own accord.

In his poem, "Hit és tudás" [Faith and Knowledge], Madách laments the disjunction between God and man in the postlapsarian state:

Megszakadt a mindenség gyűrűje,  
 Melyben Isten, ember együtt éltek,  
 S a nagy űrt tán át sem tudja szállni  
 Isten gondja és emberremények (*Válogatott művei* 313)  
 [The ring of nature's unity was riven /  
 in which God and man lived together /  
 and perhaps not even God's care and human hopes /  
 can reach and touch across the vast chasm.]

In *The Tragedy*, he seems to question how effectively God and man communicated even in the prelapsarian state. There is no dialogue between the two in Eden. The divine

pronouncements are audible but Adam hears and obeys only a “voice” (173, 271). Endowed with an intuition that parallels that of Milton’s Adam, however, he extrapolates from this the command of God (327). In the absence of the physical presence of the divine there can be no discussion between God and man and it is only intuition or instinct that supplies the nominative “God” in Adam’s mind. The Edenic state is one of instinctual existence, and knowledge in this context is limited to what can be intuited from experience. Eve feels that they are watched over by unnamed benevolent spirits and that their only duty is to be grateful to the one “who lavishes these joys on us” but again, the benefactor remains unnamed. This lack of communication stands in striking contrast to the colloquy Adam enjoys with his Maker in *Paradise Lost* and reflects a return to the Genesis story in the impression of distance it creates between God and man. In Genesis a sense of distance obtains between an omniscient, omnipotent Creator and a creature not privileged with narrative voice. In *The Tragedy* Adam is privileged with voice but until the end of the poem his voice and the voice of God do not engage in conversation: it is not until Scene 15 that he addresses the Lord directly.

The reason for the absence of dialogue between God and man in Scene 2 is that before the Fall Adam lacks the requisite self-knowledge and the concomitant understanding of the nature of God to engage in meaningful conversation. Not until Scene 15 has he reached a sufficient level of self-knowledge to understand his need of the divine. This self-knowledge represents the cumulative effect of a series of choices through which he is encouraged to identify what constitutes the ideal, the *eszme*, and how this relates to the human condition as the “sárba gyúrt kis szikra” (104), the “small spark kneaded into mud.” God sets up the model for this educational strategy in Scene 2, identifying for Adam the presence of a different spirit in Paradise and setting out for him the conditions of choice. But it is not the Lord who interacts with Adam through the dream sequence. In *The Tragedy* God is no longer the immediate catalyst to Adam’s self-realisation as he was in *Paradise Lost*. That role is played by Lucifer before, during, and after the Fall.

Not until the conclusion of the poem is Lucifer’s role as divine pawn – or divine proxy – in Adam’s education referred to explicitly by God:

And you, Lucifer, you too are a link  
in my universe. Work on!  
Your cold knowledge and foolish denial  
will be the leaven that brings the ferment on (4085-88).

Despite this, Lucifer's role is clear from the earliest lines of the work. In Scene 1 he characterises himself as the gap between God's ideas and their manifestation in physical form. As the ancient spirit of *tagadás* [denial or negation], he was the force of un-being against which all creation was formed – a claim that is not denied by the Lord – and yet he is aware of the ultimate futility of his opposition. His very negativity engenders positivity; the awareness of the gap between thought and realisation is what drives God to create. As Lucifer puts it:

You conquered me, for it's my doom  
Continually to fall in all my battles  
but to rise again with new strength (124-6).

Madách's radical revision of the Fall tradition should alert us to God's intentions to utilise Lucifer in the human sphere. It is God who introduces the concept of difference into Paradise by giving Lucifer the two trees and, symbolically, rightful claim to the spheres of knowledge and life. Adam and Eve's subsequent fall is no spanner in the works of creation but is as much a necessary part of their evolution as was Lucifer's un-being during the process of creation. The two trees represent choice rather than a "pledge of obedience" and Adam's decision to eat does not constitute sin as such. God's role in Adam's education, then, mirrors his role in creation. Having seen the "great ideal" incarnate, he steps back, confident in the knowledge that nothing will need adjusting for aeons to come. In terms of Adam's education, he creates the conditions of choice, presents these to Adam, and then withdraws, allowing Adam to find his own path to self-knowledge and bidding him "lásd, mit érsz magadban" (335) [see what you can achieve on your own]. Renouncing providential control, he leaves Adam in Lucifer's world, where the self, by itself, can be great (302).

Halfway between *Paradise Lost* and *The Tragedy of Man*, Mihály Csokonai Vitéz's poem "Az ember, a poézis első tárgya" [Man, Poetry's First Subject] (1801) addresses the same problems of human existence as Milton's Adam does when he awakes after his creation:

"Audacious mortal! Mud impassioned,"  
so a voice of air addressed me,  
"With your unholy life do you not fear  
to tread in the halls of angels?"



Who are you, why are you, where do you dwell? And at  
 whose bidding do you move? What will you become at last?  
 Until you plumb these questions' depths you're dust  
 and will continue to be dust." At these words,

like an insubstantial nebula at night,  
 under the aether's spacious ceiling,  
 tumbling with swift fall to the earth  
 I was left but dust, but ash.<sup>9</sup>

The voice of Adam's dream in *Paradise Lost* revealed itself as the Creator; Csokonai does not specify whether his "voice of air" is divine or demonic, whether its intentions are kindly or malign. But to direct to Milton's Adam the questions that voice formulates, it is at God's bidding that he moves, both literally in his transportation to Eden during the dream and figuratively in his growing self-awareness stimulated by conversation with the Creator. Unlike the later poet, whose self is undone by the unanswerability of the questions of being, becoming dust and ash, Milton affirms the possibility of knowledge. Csokonai, and with him Madách's Adam, must struggle with an anonymity that is resolved for Milton's Adam within moments of his awakening in Eden when God appears and assures him that "whom thou sought'st I am" (VIII 316). In *Paradise Lost* God never belittles man as a means to stimulate his pursuit of knowledge. Nor, in fact, does Satan; rather, he elaborates on Eve's beauty and high status and represents her to herself as "Angelic Eve" and "Empress of this fair world." A voice that compels a quest for self-knowledge through ridicule and by articulating the difference between the angels and unholy man moves towards Madách's Lucifer, whose arguments for the necessity of self-knowledge and autonomy are expressive of contempt and condescension.

Unlike the "voice of air," the directors of knowledge in *Paradise Lost* (God, Raphael, Michael and, to a lesser extent, Eve) do not urge self-knowledge as a remedy to the narrowness of human existence. Rather, self-knowledge is desirable because it entails a more perfect knowledge of God. In understanding himself, Adam understands "the spirit within" him, a spirit formed in the image of the divine, and thus understanding and

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<sup>9</sup> From the Hungarian original in *Verstár'98: a magyar líra klasszikusai*.

expressing himself, he understands and expresses God. Csokonai's "voice of air" and Madách's Lucifer urge knowledge of the self primarily in relation to its own existence: the clause "at whose bidding do you move" is swamped by a tide of self-oriented questions. The focus of the problems of existence has shifted away from knowledge of the Creator to an awareness that a self exists which can no longer fully understand itself simply by reference to its Creator. Self-knowledge and knowledge of God, inextricably linked in the work of Milton, are treated, if not as independent issues by Csokonai and Madách, at least as issues that are in the process of divorce. In *The Tragedy of Man* knowledge of the self can only occur in God's absence, while knowledge of God, and in particular of the relationship of the self to God, can only occur once knowledge of the self has been attained.

## Chapter 2

### Adam's Other Self

In Genesis Eve takes the fruit, eats it and presents it to Adam because it is “good for food...pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise” (Gen 3.6). The reader is left to presume that her character is such that she values the apparent virtues of the fruit more highly than God’s continued favour. In fact, we know nothing of Eve’s character; the Biblical account eschews any attempt at psychological motivation. The narrative and dramatic space afforded Eve by both Milton and Madách creates a character much larger than the functionality she brings from Genesis. When she awakes after her creation in *Paradise Lost*, like Adam she questions her existence. His “But who I was, or where, or from what cause, Knew not” is mirrored in her “much wond’ring where / And what I was, whence thither brought, and how” (IV 451-2). But beyond this similarity of uncertainty and questioning, the details of their nativities differ. Adam awakens in the sun and his first sight is of the sky; Eve awakens in the shade and seeks the placid water “pure as th’expanse of Heav’n” (IV 456). Adam springs up with “quick instinctive motion”; Eve lies down with “unexperienc’d thought” (457). Whereas Adam intuitively senses some “great Maker” from the fact of his own existence, Eve is drawn instead to contemplation of created things and, specifically, her own image in the pool. The overt parallelism between Eve’s discovery of her image and the Narcissus story can obscure the more significant parallels between her awakening and Adam’s, which, explored, reveal a fundamental difference between the instinctive orientation of the two characters.

Like Adam, Eve does not employ verbs of knowing in her narration of her nativity, but substitutes verbs of external perception: “look,” “seem’d,” “appear’d,” “fixt mine eyes,” “espi’d.” However, whereas Adam is aware of “to know” as a negative measure of his lack of knowledge and employs phrases that indicate a desire for certain knowledge, Eve uses positive verbs of contemplation, “much wond’ring,” “unexperienc’d thought” (it is “thought” even though “unexperienced”), “pin’d with vain desire” (it is “desire” even though “vain”), “methought” (IV 451, 457, 466, 478). Without certain knowledge, she substitutes a process of contemplation that is expressive of a degree of awareness of the

self in relationship to the external.<sup>1</sup> On the basis of this awareness she even forms judgements – in her opinion Adam is “less fair” than the image in the water – and revises those judgements in her final yielding to Adam, a yielding that implies more than a physical submission to the seizure of his hand.<sup>2</sup>

During Adam’s conversation with God, the verb “to know” is introduced as an imperative, enabling him to include it in his own vocabulary and to feel its effects in his increasingly confident self-knowledge. The conversation encourages him to look beyond the external and understand the inner nature of created things, of himself and of the divine. Significantly, God does not exhort Eve “to know.” Instead the voice bids her “follow me” and steers her from one external reality to another, from one surface (the mirror of the lake) to another (the mirror of Adam’s physical form). It is not God who first points Eve to an inner reality that surpasses what is available to external perception, but Adam, when he outlines for her the process of her creation, “To give thee being I lent / Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart / Substantial Life” (IV 483-5). God referred Eve to Adam as to him “whose image thou art,” but Adam identifies in her not “his image” but his “soul” and “other half,” pointing out that the relationship between them is not simply one of exterior and physical correspondence as the image in the pool corresponds to the physical presence of Eve but is substantial and spiritual, involving the interrelation of two physical and spiritual beings: she is not simply “His flesh, his bone” but also “Part of his Soul” (483, 487).

Given the intimate tutorial role God plays in Adam’s education, it is reasonable to ask why God did not explain to Eve the true essence of her existence as Adam’s “image,” why he did not direct her beyond the exterior to the interior reality. After all, the divine programme in Adam’s education is precisely that direction from exterior to interior. The answer is twofold and is found in Eve’s natural orientation and in God’s intention, having

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<sup>1</sup> Eve’s different orientation and intimacy with the natural world has been the subject of much critical study. Gulden finds her “more immediate means of knowing” to be “achieved through the created things” (137). McColley identifies in Eve a “questing imagination” (102), Schullenberger her “humanizing sensitivity to the sweetness of Eden” (76).

<sup>2</sup> Jacobus’s suggestion that reasoning is not enough and “Force, however gentle, and coercion, keeping her from her desired returning to the pool, are necessary for Eve to begin to come to awareness of herself” (110) cannot be absolutely sustained. Adam seizes Eve’s hand immediately, without pause to see

withdrawn from active participation in Adam's education, to leave the first couple to promote and develop each other's knowledge of self and the world.<sup>3</sup>

Even in the first moments after her nativity, Eve is oriented towards and aware of the necessity for human relationships. She does not wake and postulate from her own existence the existence of a creator but discovers instead the existence of an image, an other, and realises that this other is necessary to complete her own existence, her sense of self. It is not simply the beauty of the image that appeals to her but its "answering looks" (IV 464), its "sympathy and love" (465). Her identification of this need for an other, a need so strong that without intervention she would have lain on the bank of the lake pining "with vain desire," expresses her innate recognition of what Adam required the prompting of God to recognise – the human need for "two-and-two-ness." In articulating his need for a mate, Adam mentions his need for "rational delight" and "collateral love." In her description of the "shape within the wat'ry gleam," Eve identifies other necessary ingredients of the intimacy implicit in the Renaissance understanding of the word "conversation" - mutual delight in the other ("pleas'd I soon return'd, / Pleas'd it returned"), responsiveness ("answering looks"), "sympathy" and "love."<sup>4</sup>

It is important to note that this orientation of Eve's springs not from God's intervention but innately from her untutored and independent waking self. Desire to complete the self through the identification of the other is not something the voice imposes

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whether reasoning alone is sufficient to persuade her, and Eve's "from that time on" could refer as easily to the presentation of his reasoned argument as to the seizure of her hand.

<sup>3</sup> Identity "as *Paradise Lost* instructs us, can only be discovered in relationship" (Schullenberger 76); or, as Roussetzki puts it, "Adam does not need Eve for convenience's sake, solace or pleasure but to realize who he is essentially" (85).

<sup>4</sup> Jacobus proposes a fascinating alternative to the reading of narcissism into Eve's discovery of her image in the water, by comparing her action with that of the disembodied soul contemplating itself in the river of Paradise in Peter Sterry's *A Discourse on the Freedom of the Will* (London, 1675). "If Eve in her quest for self-knowledge...can be likened to the soul in its quest for self-knowledge as Sterry interprets it, then Eve, in paradise, even though she is not separate from her body, does just what might be expected of her. She enjoys the pleasure of seeing the river and of seeing herself. For Sterry, there is no reason to deny this pleasure to the soul – provided it is a pleasure enjoyed by the intellectual or angelic part of the soul" (115-16). Kietzman makes the sensible observation that "Eve's interest in the reflection does not have to be read simply as evidence of distorted desire that must be chastened; it could be read as a first step towards self-understanding that should be free to go further" (64). Beneath the overt narcissism of Eve's self-contemplation is a valid means towards self-knowledge that contrasts with Adam's discovery of himself.

upon Eve when it directs her away from the lake and towards Adam. It already exists in her as strongly as the orientation towards knowledge exists in Adam and enables him to make the intuitive leap from existence of self to existence of a “great Maker.” In her analysis of Eve’s narrative, Froula seems to overlook this point. Her assertion (328) that as “the voice interprets her to herself, Eve is not a self, a subject at all; she is rather a substanceless image, a mere ‘shadow’ without object until the voice unites her to Adam” implies that the voice denies Eve the true essence of herself. But while the voice fails to direct Eve towards internal realities that are vital for her growth in understanding, it does not effect a radical revision of her orientation but actually identifies that unique orientation and directs her towards an other in whom she can find fulfilment of her desire. As McColgan observes, “The ‘Heavenly Maker’ offers the appropriate instruction to elicit from his newly created beings a proper understanding of their natures and their roles” (30). In acknowledgement of impulses expressed by Adam in the moments after his creation, God grants knowledge and responsibility; similarly, he acknowledges the impetus of Eve’s nature and grants her relationship, fecundity, and motherhood. He gives Eden to Adam together with the responsibility it entails (“This Paradise I give thee, count it thine” VIII 319); to Eve he gifts Adam (“him thou shalt enjoy / Inseparably thine” IV 472-73) and blesses her with the promise that she will “bear / Multitudes like [her]self” (473-74).

The fact that Adam and Eve are possessed of different instinctive orientations and are privileged with different educational experiences does not mean that there is no appropriation of Eve by the patriarchal hierarchy of Eden. Most significantly, in her account of her nativity, she is permitted no opportunity to express herself. She does not vocalise her needs, queries, or concerns during the entire experience; it is not an educational exchange but the imposition of education. In Adam’s account of his waking, he includes his own direct speech as well as that of God. “To speak I tri’d, and forthwith spake” (VIII 271), he tells Raphael and proceeds to narrate his address to the sun, the light, the earth and the living creatures he saw around him. His questions of being, first cast in indirect speech are then translated into direct speech: “Tell me, how may I know him, how adore, / From whom I have that thus I move and live” (VIII 280-81). But Eve’s questions of being remain unarticulated, the subject of mute “wond’ring.” Her image in the lake is silent: her communion with her reflection comprises only “looks.” Kietzman’s assertion that through language one can “author a self” is critical: Eve is allowed no opportunity for self-authorship in the moments after her nativity but is authored by others. The only direct

speech embedded in her narrative is that of the invisible voice and Adam (Froula 329). To both she replies in action, as if action constitutes the only possible reply. Her “what could I do, / But follow straight, invisibly thus led?” implies a perceived lack of choice. The lack of opportunity for the kind of verbal exchange that was offered to Adam and proved so critical in his developing understanding means that her educational experience denies her the possibility of full self-discovery. She is not allowed to proceed step by step towards conclusions about herself but is informed of her nature by others. To be the recipient of such an educational experience in which knowledge of self is imposed from external sources, supplanting self-discovery, implies that in the context of Eden and for Eve the journey towards self-knowledge is of no consequence. What she needs to know is supplied by the hierarchy, filtered from God through Adam.

Yet Eve’s otherness has an effect on Adam. Having prompted Adam to the expression of the “spirit within thee.../ My Image” (VIII 440-41), God withdraws, leaving the human couple together to continue the process of self-discovery in conversation with each other (McColgan 33). That Eve’s orientation towards the external world and her “instinctive groping towards completion in another self” (MacCallum *Sons* 137) has an impact upon Adam’s more rational approach to creation is clear from his admission to Raphael in Book VIII. “Authority and Reason” are the hallmarks of Adam’s approach to creation and are attributes fostered by conversation with God in the moments after his creation. Now he feels that “Authority and Reason” are subservient to Eve, that what she “wills to do or say / Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best” (549-50). Implicit in the suggestion is the underlying realisation that her approach to the world is based on neither authority nor reason. Her unreasoned, instinctive appreciation of the value of the other in understanding the self has presented itself to Adam as an alternative way of knowing.

It is significant that Eve’s first “conversational act” with Adam is to yield to his hand and her final “conversational act” before the Fall is to withdraw her hand from his. In keeping with his authoritative and reasoned approach to created things, the impulse towards possession comes from Adam; paradoxically, the impetus towards withdrawal comes from Eve. The two actions frame their prelapsarian relationship, defining the beginning and the end of their recorded relationship before the Fall. “To love one another,” Schullenberger observes, “is, in the terms of the poem, to become the image of the other” (80). Fascinatingly, their prelapsarian relationship and their exposure to the innate orientation of the other partner effects an inversion of the first couple’s initial

orientation and their subsequent motivation in the Fall, an inversion that hinges upon opportunities for knowledge within Eden. Eve, who is initially oriented towards the necessity for human relationships and is deprived of the opportunity to learn through conversation with God, is attracted in the Fall by the possibility of higher knowledge. Adam, whose thirst for knowledge is sated by conversation with God and Raphael, falls because of his acute awareness of the necessity of human relationships.

Eve's sensitivity to the created world in *The Tragedy of Man* forms a strong parallel with that of Milton's Eve. Her awareness of the angels watching over them, her receptivity to the heavenly music, and her understanding of the unity of the disparate voices of creation in the overriding harmony of love, are reminiscent of Book IV of *Paradise Lost*, where Milton's Eve catalogues the beauty of creation and creates harmony through ring composition and the subordination of the individual charms of creation to her love for Adam. Madách's Eve, like Milton's, is possessed of a wisdom specific to herself, an innate understanding of the natural sphere that is more intimate than Adam's and that at times shows up insufficiencies in Adam's understanding.

But before exploring the nature and sphere of Eve's wisdom in *The Tragedy*, it is worth pointing to the significant difference between Milton's Eve and Madách's, namely, that in contrast to the Eve of *Paradise Lost*, the Eve of *The Tragedy* is not motivated by a desire for knowledge as a means to establish equality. Despite the fact that at first reading Madách's heaven seems to be based on a similarly patriarchal system as Milton's and the angelic choir sing of the "incarnation" of the Great Ideal, Madách's creative God is a divine mechanic who views his creation as a well-constructed machine. Contemporary illustrator Mihály Zichy represents Madách's God in traditional guise, bearded, grandfatherly yet imperious, but the structure of the Hungarian language itself, with its lack of a specifically masculine third person singular pronoun – ő meaning he, she and it – creates an absence of gender-specificity which represents a significant revision of the uncontrovertible gender dynamics of the Miltonic text.<sup>5</sup> Madách's God is "Isten" or "az Úr" – "God" or "the Lord" – never "the Father." No dramatic time is allotted to the creation of man and woman and thus we learn of Eve's creation only in her own discourse,

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<sup>5</sup> Szirtes's translation uses the original illustrations. The reader who is interested in Zichy's work will find God featured on pages 29 and 256.



not as a “help meet” or “last best gift” of Heaven but as the incarnation of Adam’s desire, “kit létre is csak hő vágyad hozott” (183) [whom your warm desire alone called forth to life]. After her nativity in *Paradise Lost* Eve discovers her image in the lake, an image equated by the voice with her “self” and which she is obliged to abandon, accepting the lack of true substance in the feminine isolated from the masculine whose image she is. Eve’s narration of her nativity is reflected in *The Tragedy* but in reflection is turned inside-out:

Where else could I hope to find [that radiance] but in you?  
 It was your warm desire that summoned me to life,  
 Like when the regal sun in streams of light,  
 Unwilling to be lonesome in the universe  
 Paints itself upon the surface of the water  
 and dallies with the image, glad to have a mate,  
 indulgently forgetting that she is but  
 the glimmered likeness of his own fire  
 and will fade to nothing when he dims (182-190).

The picture Eve paints in this speech reflects nothing but her own voice, her own values; no voice instructs her in the creation of imagery or the alignment of her loyalties. The narrative of *Paradise Lost* is liberated from the ‘gentle seizure’ of the patriarchal hand and Eve vocalises in imagery drawn from her observation of the natural world her own feelings of [inter]dependence upon Adam. While the image builds towards an expression of the reflection’s reliance upon the sun to sustain it, the focus of the passage is not the existence of the reflection but the existence of the sun itself: five lines deal with the sun, compelled by loneliness to create and rejoicing in that creation, while only two lines are devoted to the reflection’s dependency. Eve’s complex word-picture suggests that any act of creation is effectively narcissistic: the sun creates a reflection on the water not incidentally (as does Eve in *Paradise Lost*) but with deliberate intent, attempting to resolve a lack within itself. The frailty of the reflection is reflected in the frailty of the sun, that loneliness that drives it to seek its image on the water.

Madách’s Eve is not relegated to a subordinate status in the dissemination of received wisdom and experiences no sense of inferiority. The voice of God that delivers the initial warning the fruit Trees of Knowledge and Life and the dire consequences of tasting the fruit addresses itself to Adam but is heard equally by Eve. The second warning,

“Ember, vigyázz!” [Man (or, Human) beware!], while couched in the second person singular imperative, lacks any specific designation and can be read as equally applicable to Eve as to Adam. Unlike the Eve of *Paradise Lost*, who first initiates conversation with her husband only in the final quarter of the epic and whose initiation of conversation constitutes a subtle rebellion against the patriarchal and hierarchical order of creation, Madách’s Eve opens the dialogue in Eden and Adam’s response, “És úrnak lenni mindennek felett” (155) [And to be lord over everything], is grammatically dependent upon her opening line, the infinitive *lenni* [to be] referring back to her exclamation “Ah, élni, élni: milly édes, mi szép!” (154) [Ah, to live, to live – how sweet, how beautiful!].

The equality established in these opening lines continues throughout Scene II. Besides the quantitative parity of their dialogue (Adam is given 42 ½ lines of dialogue, Eve 38), their response to Lucifer’s reasoning is presented in a series of complementary one-line utterances arranged in a way that grants primacy to neither but rather emphasises the differences between the two protagonists.

Adam: You tell such tales...they make my head reel.

Eve: I’m enraptured; you say such beautiful, new things (258-9).

Eve: How cruel our creator is after all.

Adam: But what if you deceive us? (267-8)

Adam: The Lord said that he will punish us if we choose

Some other path than that he has appointed.

Eve: Why would he punish us? (304-6)

Eve: Then I shall pluck one of these fruits.

Adam: The Lord has cursed them (327-8).

This final exchange continues with two and a half more lines from Adam but is effectively punctuated at this point by Lucifer’s laughter. Similarly, their responses after the Fall are antithetical. Eve’s despairing “Végünk van” (335) [This is the end of us] is countered by Adam’s emphatic response to Lucifer’s asking whether they are discouraged: “Korántse hidd” (336) [Not in the least].

Eve’s one substantial speech in Scene 2, that beginning “Miért büntetne” [Why would he punish us], provides a point of departure for an examination of her discourse and

what it reveals about her character in relation to knowledge. These lines constitute her only attempt at abstract rationalisation in Scene 2 and for this reason throw into focus the underlying consistency in her various apparently fickle responses to argument and action. They also demonstrate how all her wisdom is grounded in observation of and experience of the world of the senses. Madách's Eve shares with Milton's an instinctive and integrated understanding of nature as perceptible to the human senses; Gulden's observation, "Eve's more immediate means of knowing is achieved through the created things" (137), is equally applicable to Madách's Eve. Her reply to Adam begins with a semblance of logic:

Why should he punish us? If he has marked out  
The path he wishes us to follow, surely  
He made us such that sinful impulses  
Will not lure us to another way (306-9).

She justifies her reasoning not by further abstraction but by argument based on "created things." She likens their spiritual state to observed, physical realities, realising her metaphors with compelling detail. The precarious state of their innocence is compared to standing with a spinning head ["szedelgő fejjel"] above an abyss, while she suggests that sin is as much a part of God's design as is a storm among bright, sunlit days and that temptation warms them ["melegít" – as might the sun]. Her argument can be reduced to a simple comparison of visible creation with invisible, the perceived world with the imperceptible. She resorts to parallels between the physical and spiritual spheres of creation and overlooks the logical counterargument to her initial surmise (307-9), namely, that they have been created with choice, with freewill. Standing in contrast to Eve's reliance upon the natural world to explain the spiritual, Adam's responses are based purely in idealism. He clings to the ideal of divine righteousness that will punish disobedience, arguing that "The Lord said that he will punish us if we choose / Some other path than that he has appointed." (304-5).

Knowledge in the prelapsarian state is vital in *Paradise Lost* – to Adam because he has opportunity to pursue it, to Eve because she lacks that opportunity. In *The Tragedy of Man*, however, knowledge does not become an issue for either Adam or Eve until the arrival of Lucifer in Eden. In the final moment of decision, commanding Eve to pluck the fruit or at least colluding in her decision made a second ahead of his (another revision of the traditional story that eases the burden of responsibility from Eve to Adam), Adam

declares his intention to know: “legyünk tudók mint Isten” (330) [let us be knowing ones like God]. Eve, on the other hand, avoids the verb to know throughout the entire scene and rather speaks of feeling (érezni 155) and its correlative understanding (érteni cf 201). For Eve the two are inseparable. Understanding is arrived at through her sensitive experience of the world. In Scene 4 she cries “hiába kéred azt, / Ki kínjainknak nem volt részese, / Nem ért, nem ért! (601-3) [Don’t waste your breath. / He who hasn’t shared our agony / can’t understand, can’t understand!]. One understands because one has experienced. Thus understanding is a sensitive response to a system of stimuli rather than the result of an abstracted logical process.

It is in this sense that Madách’s Eve, while not vulnerable to the appeal of any equality knowledge would seem to proffer, is nevertheless vulnerable to the arguments presented by Lucifer in a way that Adam, with his idealism, is not. Lucifer, the “gap” who necessitated creation, whose first influence on the dramatic action of the poem is to interrupt the heavenly paeans with silence, now drives a wedge of ideological difference between Adam and Eve. Eve, with her acuity to the resonances of the perceptible world, responds immediately to the new stimulus Lucifer provides, not with the response of reasoned logic but with the logic of emotion. Her “én lelkesülök, szép s új dolgokat mondsz” (250) [I’m enraptured; you say such beautiful, new things] with its emphatic use of the first person pronoun “én” articulates not just her fascination with what Lucifer says but presents her response as consciously different to that of Adam.

This emotional response is not confined to her reaction to Lucifer but is present as her defining characteristic from the first lines of Scene 2. Her “Ah, to live, to live – how lovely, how sweet!” led Sőter to identify Eve as the representative of the natural sphere (180), while Lesér (astonishingly) finds Eve to be “limited to strictly sexual and maternal roles” (48). Lengyel, who recognises that at one level *The Tragedy* comprises “az emberi alkat...ellenmondásának szimbolikus cselekménybe vetítődése” [the projection of the contradictions of human nature into a symbolic plot] (149) and identifies in Eve “az ember szellemiséget rejtő alkatának a kivetítődése...az ösztöni élet megtestesítője” [the projection of (one facet) of the individual’s inner being...the embodiment of instinctual life] (162), nevertheless effectively discredits her when, discussing the divine behest to strive on, he comments, “Éva is megérti, a sajátosan érzelmi lény, sőt éppen ő érti meg leghamarabb” [Eve, too, understands, that singularly sensitive creature; indeed, she even understands first] (155), as if understanding is not at all what one expects of Eve. Lotze

claims that Eve “is more inclined toward enjoyment of life than Adam” (67), a comment that fails to take into consideration the grammatical dependence of Adam’s first line upon Eve’s: Adam is also inclined towards enjoyment of life and does not negate Eve’s expression of enjoyment but rather adds to it with his “és úrnak lenni mindenek felett” (155) [And to be lord over everything]. Lotze continues, “Her ties to nature are closer than his; she is emotional and is not given to abstract reflection....She is less stable, can be tempted more easily, and tends to act without thinking” (67). With the exception of the final clause, we could as easily apply Lotze’s analysis to Milton’s Eve as a very crude appraisal of character but it is this final clause that proves the crucial one, for it is precisely Eve’s apparent tendency to act without thought – a criticism that cannot be attached to Milton’s Eve, who responds to Satan’s temptation with a consideration and logic that more characteristically pertain to the masculine cast of mind <sup>6</sup> – that points to the significant difference in Madách’s portrayal of Eve and, consequently, to his different intent and the underlying philosophical message of the *The Tragedy*.

Eve acts “without thinking.” It is easy to understand how Lotze arrives at this conclusion but an examination of the text demonstrates not that Eve acts without thinking but that the thought processes that inform her actions and words differ from those of Adam and expressive not of a rational but of an emotive logic. Eve does not “act without thinking” in the sense that her actions are unrelated to any cognitive-responsive process. Her actions are not ungoverned or haphazard but are the outcome of a thought-process so different, so divorced from the linear mode of reasoning associated with masculine response that Lotze fails to recognise it for what it is: an entirely feminine response, consistent and logical within its own framework as *érzelem* or sensibility, a complementary “other” to Adam, whose response is invariably idealistic. In this sense Madách’s Eve is radically feminist. Lieb’s study of Milton’s understanding of the high status of the Biblical ‘ezer *keneghdo*, the “help-meet,” and McColley’s examination of antecedent versions of the Fall story show to what extent Milton’s text is revisionary, reworking traditions in a way that affords Eve a new dignity and virtue. But this rehabilitation occurs within a text dominated by the masculine: Milton’s Eve is central to the action of the epic but in the final analysis it is Adam who is privileged by the angelic

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<sup>6</sup> Stevenson notes that the basis on which Eve decides to eat the fruit is “on the Platonic scale of understanding, will, and appetite, higher than Adam’s, and more typically or stereotypically masculine. She

visitors and, in terms of knowledge, Eve cannot “add to what wants in female sex” and assert her equality either through her difference or in spite of it. The subtext of *Paradise Lost* is rich with the “possibility of feminist thinking” (Schullenberger 70) but it is Madách who, whether with conscious intent or not, releases Eve from possibilities and endows her with actuality as an entirely feminine principle of knowledge not only within Eden but also within the individual. Madách’s Eve does not argue against, challenge or assume the masculine role but, perfectly expressing and perfectly expressed by her feminine qualities, exerts an artless influence on action and actors with profound results.

Eve’s characterisation is subtler and more significant than a simple equation with the natural sphere. She embodies not the natural world but *érzelem* [sensibility or responsive sensitivity] itself and while this pertains largely to the perceived world and draws its strength and wisdom from that perceived world, it is also responsive to other stimuli in a way that is consistent with the nature of *érzelem*, which is defined as

Az ember tudatának, lelkivilágának az az állapota, tartalma, gyak. az értelemmel és az akarattal szemben az a megnyilatkozása, amelynek forrása az emberekkel, tárgyakkal, a külső világ jelenségeivel szemben való nem tudatos, egyéni állásfoglalás (*A magyar nyelv értelmező szótára*).

[That condition and content of a person’s consciousness or state of mind, often its manifestation in opposition to intellect and volition, the source of which is a subconscious, subjective attitude with respect to people, objects and the manifestations of the external world].

The “inconsistencies” in Eve’s character that Lotze complains of are no longer problematic when we remember that *érzelem* is by very definition the unreasoned and subjective response of the individual to the stimuli of the external world. What remains constant is the emotive basis of the response, its immediacy, and the evaluation of things as they are perceived. When the voice of the Lord forbids them to touch the Trees of Knowledge and Life, Adam’s “why” queries the terms of the prohibition: “Csodás parancs, de úgy látszik, komoly” (169) [A strange behest, but it seems serious]. Eve’s “why” reflects an evaluation based in the perceived reality of the object: “Miért szebb e két fa, mint más; vagy miért / Épp ez tilalmas? (170-71) [Why are these two trees lovelier than the rest; or why / Are only they forbidden?]. It is not the injunction that she cannot

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responds to temptation more rationally than Adam, Adam more emotionally than Eve” (127).

understand but the apparent discrepancy between the injunction and her own system of evaluation: the trees are beautiful and therefore should not harbour evil. When Lucifer suggests that faith and dependence deny the self full realisation, Eve's response is immediate and emotive: "I'm enraptured; you say such beautiful, new things." The suggestion that God has withheld knowledge and eternal life provokes her to re-evaluate what had previously been accepted as loving providence: "How cruel our creator is after all" (267). When the voice of God abandons Adam, Eve's response is again emotional and she reacts to conditions as they are immediately perceived: "This is the end of us" (336). Rather than taking these responses as evidence of the instability of her character or as lack of thought, they should be seen as the entirely consistent response of *érzelem* to situations as they arise.

Although the scope of this thesis does not allow a detailed examination of Eve's characterisation, an examination of her role in the next few scenes will illustrate the consistency of her presentation and its significance in Madách's symbolic representation of the interdependent yet often conflicting facets of human nature. In Scene 3 Adam agonises over his mortality and the uncertainty of existence, and momentarily regrets discarding the ideal of divine righteousness:

Oh, why

Did I cast aside that providence

My instincts dimly felt but did not treasure,

For which my mind now yearns – oh, but in vain (450-53).

Existence itself has been shown to be a process in a constant state of flux and not the solid fact on which Adam had based his claims of self-divinity. Eve's response appears to miss entirely the substance of his distress, focusing rather on the details of the altered physical world:

Oh yes, yes, I feel the same way, too.

When you are doing battle with wild beasts,

Or I, with drooping strength, nurse our garden,

I turn and look across this wide world

But in earth or heaven find no kin,

no friend, to comfort or to guard us.

It was so different once in happier times (454-60).

Following Adam's agonising over the very nature of existence, Eve's words sound like little more than complaint, comprising nothing more than a quantitative sensitive response to experienced reality. But before dismissing them as shallow in comparison to Adam's grappling with the very substance of being itself, it is worth noting that she expresses the reality of "that providence" that Adam's "instincts dimly felt but did not treasure," identifying in response to his expression of loneliness those caring friends she first refers to in Scene 2 156. What Adam's instincts "dimly felt," Eve's acuity to the experienced world named as friends and kin. If she now expresses distress at the lack of these companions, it is because she was more acutely aware of their companionship in Eden.

In Egypt, Eve links understanding to experience and claims that Pharaoh cannot understand because he has not experienced. In this scene her role as *érzelem* [sensitivity] presents the most emphatic contrast to Adam's search for the ideal. Not only is she strongly characterised as possessing an acutely responsive sensitivity but she becomes, in a sense, *érzelem* itself. At the beginning of the scene Adam is devoid of any response to the external world. When Lucifer asks what he feels in his heart, he replies "Úrt érzek, mondhatatlan úrt" (590) [I feel a void, an inexpressible void]. Eve's appearance as a slave-woman falling with a cry of anguish beside her dying husband immediately negates the void in Adam's heart and replaces it with feeling, an experience to which he is unaccustomed: "mi ismeretlen érzés száll szivembe" (607) [what unfamiliar feeling enters my heart?]. Through Eve, Adam begins to feel and understand his own emotions. Her presence allows him an awareness of the external, experiential world, not only by opening him to love but also by exposing him to the world beyond the self: "Szíveden keresztül / A jajszó, mint villám, fejembe csap" (672-3) [Through your heart / That wail of woe, like a bolt of lightning, strikes into my head]. Thus Eve functions as a conduit between the external world and the self, opening Adam to the possibility of emotion in himself and sensitive response to others, a function entirely parallel to that of *érzelem*.

Eve's fluctuations between despair and hope in Athens are similarly expressive of *érzelem*. Her function vis-à-vis Adam here is different from that in Egypt but her role is still the expression of emotion: she prays not for civic crowns for Miltiades' brow, only "domestic peace for the champion's heart" (882), and her response to situations as they change is the consistently immediate, subjective response of *érzelem*. Lucifer's false account of Miltiades' return elicits despair rather than a reasoned response. Similarly, when Miltiades speaks of his sacrifices on behalf of his homeland, Eve's reply is couched



in emotive terms, “The fatherland and my heart bleed more than you” (974), and when she realises her fears are unfounded, her response is once again not logical but emotional: “hol van boldogabb nő, / Mint a te nőd, nemes nagy férfiú” (986-87) [where is a woman happier / than your wife, you great and noble man]. In Rome it is Eve who first feels and expresses the emptiness of the hedonistic life. Her rejection of the values of hedonism is not based in rational logic but is a purely emotional response or a “subconscious, subjective attitude.” She is aware of the nature of her rejection and speaks of the emotive logic that underlies it as something experienced in a dream-state: “úgy érzem, mintha álomban feküdném” (1236) [I feel as if I lay dreaming]. The auditory stimuli of this hedonistic existence, its laughter, music and song, stimulate her emotive response and waken memories of the distant music and song of Eden. The sensitivity Eve demonstrated in Scene 2 to the music of the heavens continues to characterise her responses to whatever world in which she finds herself.

Before the entrance of Lucifer into Eden, Eve’s responsive sensitivity is balanced and complemented by Adam’s idealistic world-view. In reply to her query about the Trees of Knowledge and Life, Adam replies with an idealistic analysis in terms that Eve as *érzelem* can appreciate, “Hát mért kék az ég, / Miért zöld a liget – elég, hogy úgy van” (171-72) [Why is the sky blue, / Why is the woodland green? Enough that things are as they are]. His reply acknowledges Eve’s evaluation of the perceptible quality of nature but continues to affirm his own idealistic stance – “things are as they are” is like saying “God is God,” a position Adam agonises over in the moments before the Fall. In their unfallen state Adam and Eve complement each other as *eszme* and *érzelem*, as ideal and sensibility. It is only after Lucifer’s incursion into Eden that their complementary approach to the world fragments into difference as he drives a wedge between them.

In *Paradise Lost* Eve makes a conscious choice to remain with Adam: “So dear I love him, that with him all deaths / I could endure, without him live no life” (IX 832-3). Madách’s Eve never stands on the horns of such a dilemma but, reflecting her word-picture of the sun on the water, her interdependence on Adam throughout *The Tragedy* is such that her role gains significance and meaning only to the extent to which it effects his development and, conversely, his development, in which the development of the individual can be traced, would be impossible without constant interaction with the creative feminine. As the Fall effects separation, with Lucifer standing between Eve’s responsive sensitivity and Adam’s idealism, the subsequent action of *The Tragedy*

explores the interdependence of sensibility and idealism and the need for harmonious resolution to the disparate elements of human nature, a resolution that is finally achieved not only in the harmony imposed by God in Scene 15, in which the Lord affirms what has already been demonstrated by the action of the poem, but also through Eve's pregnancy, in which the disjunction effected by Lucifer in the Fall is healed in the engendering of new life. Dramatic irony is generated, however, by the fact that Adam fails to recognise Eve's true role. In Scene 4, having just renounced his throne in response to the awakening she has effected, he identifies not the enormous strength and dynamic influence of *érzelem* as evidenced by his own abdication, but only Eve's female weakness, that strength might love (756). Despite everything, he sees her as "csak virág.../ Haszontalan, de szép" (772-3) – a flower, pretty but useless.

### Chapter 3

#### The Fall: Failure or Discovery

In *The Tragedy of Man* Adam never arrives at a full appreciation of Eve's different wisdom and the critical role it plays both in his own developing knowledge and in the resolution of the harmony fragmented by the Fall. Yet he identifies and accepts her otherness. He recognises that she represents a different approach to life and values this difference:

My own intellect is enough for me. I do not  
 Lean upon your breast for strength or greatness's sake,  
 Nor for the sake of knowledge; all this  
 I can much better find within my books. But  
 Speak, just speak, so I might hear your voice,  
 So that its vibrations thrill my heart.  
 It hardly matters what you say (762-8).

For his counterpart in *Paradise Lost*, however, what Eve says does matter: "what she wills to do or say" (VIII 549) is singled out by Adam as one of the prime factors underlying his inability to accept the differences between himself and his "other self." While Eve's fall in *Paradise Lost* is motivated by a desire for higher knowledge, Adam's fall entails a serious failure in self-knowledge.<sup>1</sup> The decision to fall is consciously made and comprises a

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<sup>1</sup> The Fall constitutes a failure in knowledge other than self-knowledge. After Raphael's narration of the War in Heaven, to which – we are told – Adam listened attentively, his recapitulation comprises an expression of wonder at the differences between the realms of heaven and earth (70-71) and an appreciation of the historical value of the narration (72-75), but includes only one brief acknowledgement of the primary lesson contained in the narration, namely, that he should learn from the terrible example of the fallen angels and beware of falling himself (77-79). His identification of Raphael as the "divine Historian" or "divine Interpreter" focuses on the narrative as narrative and fails to identify those lessons embedded within it that could have been of such assistance to him. His most critical omission is his failure to recognise in Abdiel an exemplar of obedience. Book V ends with Abdiel's continuing resistance in the face of Satan's subversion, while Book VI shows his triumph – albeit temporary – over his enemy. Raphael goes to some length to establish Abdiel as an example of faithfulness:

So spake the Seraph Abdiel faithful found,  
 Among the faithless, faithful only hee;

conscious rejection of the self-knowledge developed through conversation with God in Book VIII: he eats “Against his better knowledge, not deceived” (IX 998). Adam’s account of his creation and the conversation that leads to his perfected understanding of himself and God, whose image he is, is presented in as close proximity as possible to his bewilderment over the nature of Eve. Barely one hundred lines after God’s approving words, Adam expresses his perplexity over the woman created as his “image” and “likeness.” He is able to identify the realities of Eve’s nature but fails to assimilate these within their relationship in a way that does not threaten his self-knowledge. In the Fall his perplexity is resolved, but at the expense of self-knowledge and in a way that inverts the relationship between self and image.

In his conversation with God, Adam is prompted to “know” and “understand,” to discover truths about himself and God, identifying those qualities that characterise his own human condition and differentiate it from the divine. The interrelationship between self and the source it mirrors is established, and the necessity of understanding the source of being in order to understand the self. Expressing the “spirit within” him, Adam is also expressing God’s “Image.” The conversation also leads towards Adam’s awareness of his need for “collateral love.” Man, unable to raise the animals around him “erect from prone” simply by conversing with them, as can God, yet desires creative opportunity to “beget Like of his like, his Image multipli’d” (423-4). The theme of mirroring in relation to creation and procreation is explored throughout *Paradise Lost*. Eve’s picture in *The*

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Among innumerable false, unmov’d,  
 Unshak’n uneduc’d, unterrifi’d  
 His Loyalty he kept, his Love, his Zeal;  
 Nor number, nor example with him wrought  
 To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind  
 Though single (V 896-903).

The emphatic repetition of “faithful” juxtaposed with “faithless,” together with the four negative adjectives with which Raphael chooses to describe Abdiel should be enough to catch Adam’s attention. Abdiel’s Loyalty, Love and Zeal are singled out for praise, and then — a telling point in hindsight when Adam, faced with a life of solitary obedience to God, feels he cannot bear to be alone — Raphael praises Abdiel’s perseverance even when outnumbered by thousands to one. Similarly, Abdiel’s reply to Satan’s specious logic (VI 172-88) provides Adam with an example of how to recognise and parry the falsity of Satan’s arguments. Yet Adam fails to recall this angelic model of faithfulness for Eve’s benefit when they discuss

*Tragedy of Man* of the sun compelled by loneliness to paint its reflection upon the surface of the water and then rejoicing in that reflection illustrates the essentially narcissistic nature of all creation. In *Paradise Lost*, too, creation is narcissistic, with the created or procreated being existing as a reflection of the creator or progenitor.<sup>2</sup> Sin is the “perfect image” of Satan (II 763-65). The Son is the “Divine Similitude” (III 384) in whom “all his Father shone / Substantially express’d” (III 139-40). Adam is created “in the Image of God” and Adam and Eve bear “in their looks Divine / The Image of their glorious Maker” (IV 291-92). The created world itself is a mirror in which God is “dimly seen / In these thy lowest works” (V 157-58). The creation of Eve adds another dimension to self-knowledge. God promises the desired partner with whom Adam can “beget / Like of his like, his Image multiplied,” but Eve is herself Adam’s image: God assures Adam that “What next I bring shall please thee ... / Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self, / Thy wish, exactly to thy heart’s desire” (VIII 449-51). As Adam and Eve resemble God in a physical and spiritual sense, so Eve is physically and spiritually a reflection of Adam. He can identify in her not only his “likeness” and “image,” “Bone of my Bone, Flesh of my Flesh,” but also “my Self / Before me” (VIII 495-96) and “Part of my Soul” (IV 487). While details of the relationship obviously differ – he is not her creator but only the means through which she is created – the relationship between Eve and Adam parallels the relationship between Adam and God in so far as in both instances the former is the image of the latter. To appropriate Raphael’s phrase, Eve is “inward and outward both, [Adam’s] image fair” (VIII 221).

Initially, Adam’s response to his image is expressive of his accurate knowledge of himself and of God. His “sudden apprehension” is still endued with knowledge, and he is able to recognise Eve’s relationship with the divine (she is God’s gift), her relationship with himself (she is bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh), and the process of assimilation whereby the self and its image can live in harmonious interrelationship (man and wife are to be “one Flesh, one Heart, one Soul”). He names her, an act that, like his naming of the

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separation at the beginning of Book X and fails again to recall it for his own benefit when faced with the choice between obedience to God and love for Eve.

<sup>2</sup> Kilgour discusses the narcissistic basis of creation: “If creativity is fundamentally divine, it is also essentially narcissistic, originating in God’s self-love and the copying and multiplying of His own image. Appropriately, given his own interest in “self esteem” (*Paradise Lost* 8.572) and reputation as a sublime egotist, Milton draws on a tradition in which God and the Son are celestial narcissists” (1).

animals, demonstrates his understanding of her inner nature. He is able to identify an internal, spiritual reality in the details of her external appearance: "Grace was in all her steps, Heav'n in her Eye, / In every gesture dignity and love" (488-89). As he looks at her, he sees that her nature is perfectly expressed in her physical appearance. Her steps, her eye, her gestures betray the truths of an inner self which, as "Heav'n's last, best gift," fills the external form with grace, dignity and love. The educational model established in the dialogue between God and Adam provides a means of establishing the interrelation between the self and its likeness or the self and its source. Adam and Eve also have opportunity to engage in mutually edifying conversation and her discourse influences his as much as his does hers.<sup>3</sup> Both are provided with opportunity to identify the differences between the self and the other and to understand the interrelation between self and image. In Adam's narration of his nativity and in Eve's account of hers, it becomes evident that knowledge of the self cannot be divorced from knowledge of the other: only through understanding the nature of God can Adam understand himself, while Eve's fascination with the image in the water, which illustrates her innate understanding of the importance of the other in delineating the self, finds fulfilment when she yields to Adam whose image she is.

But the fact that Adam's continuing response to Eve must take place outside the interaction with God that was so vital to his developing knowledge means that he cannot test his understanding of this "last, best gift" by discussing it with his Creator and, in the absence of a heavenly tutor, the understanding expressed in the moments after Eve's creation begins to be eroded by doubts. Having initially identified her as God's fairest gift, now he suggests that Nature "On her bestowed / Too much of Ornament, in outward show / Elaborate, of inward less exact" (VIII 537-39). Her physical loveliness, once properly identified as the material reflection and correlative of her internal, spiritual beauty, is now identified as "ornament" and "outward show," not only divorced from

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<sup>3</sup> On the mutual influence their conversation, see McColgan: Adam and Eve "come to know, through divine instruction and human interaction, themselves, each other, and their relationship to God" (30). Kietzman finds "discursive complexity" to be "at the heart of human relationship...the central challenge to realizing Eden in the making of conversation" (56). Compare McColley: "Adam learns that his image or other half is not *just* his image, has much to give, can enlarge and change *him*" (106); and Schullenberger: "*if* contemplation and valour are fundamentally masculine values, and *if* softness and grace are feminine values, either set is essentially inadequate in the absence of the other" (76).

internal truth but seen as incommensurate with internal truth, ironically devalued by exceeding the value of her “inward” beauty: her physical beauty is deemed “too much.”

As his ability to perceive internal reality in and through external form begins to falter, Adam’s understanding of his “image” and of the relationship between that image and himself also falters. He admits that he struggles to implement a relationship with this image that does not impinge upon what he properly understands as his own attributes: authority, reason, and “higher knowledge.”

When I approach

Her loveliness, so absolute she seems  
And in herself complete, so well to know  
Her own, that what she wills to do or say,  
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best;  
All higher knowledge in her presence falls  
Degraded, Wisdom in discourse with her  
Loses discount’nanc’t, and like folly shows;  
Authority and Reason on her wait,  
As one intended first, not after made  
Occasionally (VIII 546-56).

Authority and reason seem to desert him, for it is neither authoritative nor reasonable that they should “on her wait.” He finds he cannot formulate an appropriate relationship between the image and a self that has already established a right relationship with the divine. Progress in knowledge depends on “the discrimination and right evaluation of three things: the ‘I’ or self as centre of impulse, feeling and thought; God, as the source of life and reason; and nature, or the ‘other’ (including other selves), that which is nether [sic] God nor self but contains notable expressions of both” (MacCallum *Sons* 111). With the creation of Eve, the linear relationship between man and God has become a triangular relationship, and Adam must understand his relationship to both God and his “image” in order to maintain a proper understanding of himself. His admission to Raphael acknowledges his failure to establish a reasonable relationship with his “image.” His repeated use of “seems” indicates his awareness that his evaluation of Eve is problematic, not based on inner reality but only upon external seeming.

The structure of the poem draws attention to these flaws in Adam’s understanding, juxtaposing his perfected understanding of himself and God with his failure to understand

the relationship between himself and Eve. His growth in self-knowledge and knowledge of God is rewarded with a divine smile and “gracious voice.” But by the time he comes to analyse the nature of his relationship with Eve, his understanding wins no angelic smile but only Raphael’s “contracted brow.” Raphael’s reply, while often read as reproof or even censure, is designed to address the problems Adam has identified, clarifying the distinction between outward and inward reality.<sup>4</sup> He reminds Adam of the role he is to play in the establishment of this one link in the triangular relationship between self, image, and God. Adam is not to be “diffident / Of Wisdom” (VIII 562-3), is not to value an “outside” or subject his soul to carnal pleasure, but is to “weigh with her thyself” and remember and value the spiritual dimension of love “by which to heav’nly Love thou may’st ascend” (592). This is not the first time in Book VIII that Raphael has corrected Adam’s tendency to dwell upon external appearance. In response to Adam’s query about the heavens, the angel reminded him that external appearance is not to be confused with internal reality, for “Great / Or Bright infers not Excellence” and what appears to be insignificant and glitters less may in fact contain more “solid good” (VIII 90-91, 93). As this earlier correction persuades Adam to put aside “perplexing thoughts,” so now his reorientation towards inner reality and spiritual significance is successful. As the similarity between Adam and his Creator extends to a physical likeness but it is the inward, spiritual self, the “spirit within thee,” that God specifically identifies as “My Image,” now, encouraged by Raphael, Adam focuses not on the physical unity he experiences with Eve

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<sup>4</sup> That Adam articulates his uncertainty over his relationship with Eve in Raphael’s hearing implies that the admission is, at some level, a request for help or, as MacCallum puts it, “an attempt to clarify and master a complex psychic event by putting it into words....Adam directs his words to a being of superior intelligence, whose advice is trusted” (*Sons* 149). Raphael’s reply certainly suggests that he understands it in this light. Allen believes that Raphael overreacts and that while a mild rebuke might have been sufficient Raphael is “sharp, blunt, and severely corrective” (115). He even goes so far as to impute “injustice and spleen” to the archangel (16). To my mind, his observation that Adam is “hardly ‘sunk in carnal pleasure’ just because his language is a touch effusive” (116) misses the point: it is not the effusive nature of Adam’s appreciation of Eve that is the problem so much as his focus upon external seeming at the cost of internal reality.



but upon their “Union of Mind...in us both one Soul” (604). The crisis of self-knowledge precipitated by the image is averted – for the moment.<sup>5</sup>

While the conscious focus of Adam’s admission to Raphael is his inability properly to relate his self to its “image,” the admission reveals another flaw in his thinking, one that, like his focus upon the external rather than the internal mirror of the self, will play a role in the failure of his self-knowledge in the Fall. He ascribes his feelings of confusion – and, in fact, Eve’s creation – to “Nature.” In their morning prayer in Book V, Adam and Eve urge individual created things to praise God. The winds are to praise God by blowing gently or loudly, the pine trees by waving, and vapours by either evaporating or condensing. In other words, the created world praises God by the exercise of its multifarious natural functions. Nature exists as the expression of, and to express, God’s goodness. The created world is a mirror in which God is “dimly seen” (V 157) and created things “declare / [His] goodness beyond thought, and Power Divine” (158-59). Eve, too, as a “created thing,” should be valued as a manifestation of the creator’s “goodness beyond thought” and in response to that goodness.<sup>6</sup> Yet Adam, possessed by unresolved uncertainties, attempts to explain his response to her by dislocating “Nature” from God and ascribing her creation to “Nature” rather than to God:

Or Nature fail’d in me, and left some part  
Not proof enough such Object to sustain,  
Or from my side subducting, took perhaps  
More than enough; at least on her bestow’d  
Too much of Ornament (VIII 534-38).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See Schullenberger: “Adam’s forthright response, which honours Eve’s ‘thousand decencies that daily flow / From all her words and actions’ (VIII. 601-02), indicates that Raphael’s apparent demeaning of Eve has served to exalt Adam’s understanding of her” (75).

<sup>6</sup> On creation as a glass in which one sees darkly, see MacCallum: “Adam’s natural bias...has been to see god present in his works as the maker in the thing made” (*Sons* 191); and Fish: “There is only one good reason for positively valuing created things: as either a manifestation of the creator’s goodness and glory or as part of a response to the creator’s goodness and glory. Any other reason is a bad reason” (55).

<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, as McColley observes (“Arts” 102), the passage reveals in Adam the fear of a sort of reverse inequality – while Eve is being made increasingly aware of her subordinate position, Adam fears that her otherness has been bought at the expense of his own selfhood. Froula suggests that “Adam’s sense of inadequacy in face of what he sees as Eve’s perfection” is a simple case of archetypal womb envy (331-32),

Not only is Adam failing properly to evaluate Eve as his “image” and God’s, but he is also falsely discriminating between cause and effect in creation. God is the Creator; Nature is the resulting creature. While Nature as a creative divinity is a familiar figure in Renaissance literature (Spenser’s “Dame Nature” in *The Faerie Queene* provides a prime example), Milton maintained that Nature is a created thing and not the Creator. In *Christian Doctrine* he asserts that “nature or *natura* implies by its very name that it was *natam*, born. Strictly speaking it means nothing except the specific character of a thing, or that general law in accordance with which everything comes into existence and behaves” (*Works* VI 131). Adam’s previous usages of “Nature” certainly fall within the scope of this definition. In understanding the “Nature” of the animals, it is their essence that he grasps. When he recounts how sleep overtook him, “call’d / By Nature as in aid” (VIII 458-59), he refers to the general law under which everything acts. But neither an essence nor a general rule can account for the removal of a rib and its fashioning into Eve; that demands a specific act of creation. Raphael’s response, “Accuse not Nature,” suggests strongly that he, too, feels that Adam is stretching a point to lay the responsibility for the creation of Eve at Nature’s feet.

The juxtaposition of Adam’s satisfactory understanding of himself and his relationship with the divine and his less than satisfactory understanding of his relationship with Eve is not coincidental. The structure of Books IV to VIII presents an ongoing revision of their relationship, framed by their accounts of their nativity. Eve is created last but narrates her creation in her first speech in Book IV; Adam is created first but recounts his creation in his penultimate speech in Book VIII. In Book IV Eve is shown to require the guidance of God and Adam in order to find meaningful fulfilment of her nature. Adam, on the other hand, is presented in Book IV as already possessing considerable knowledge of God, the created world and his own responsibility, knowledge gained (apparently) without assistance. Through this arrangement, the text creates the impression that it is only Eve who is in need of tutoring. In keeping with this, Adam’s discourse is overtly didactic: he reiterates the conditions of the prohibition, explains what night is for, and dwells upon their responsibility to care for the garden. It is not until Book VIII that we learn that he,

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an interesting reading given the fact that at this stage Eve’s womb has produced nothing worth envying, whereas the masculine Creator and Adam’s own rib decidedly have.

too, required God's guidance to attain this pitch of knowledge.<sup>8</sup> In a sense the text subverts itself, revising and undermining the dynamics of the relationship as they appear to be established in Book IV. The arrangement also serves to place Adam's creation story as closely as possible to his decision to fall, his growing understanding of himself and his responsibility to God as closely as possible to his failure in responsibility and self-knowledge. The negatively pivotal role to be played in the Fall by mirroring and the image is foreshadowed by the positively pivotal role played by mirroring during Creation as Adam is identified as God's "image" and expresses his need for an "image" of his own.

In falling, Adam disregards the connection between himself and God, as well as that between Eve and God, and chooses to maintain that single "link of Nature" that exists between himself and his "other self." It is a choice informed by misunderstandings, one that could not have been made had he exercised proper self-knowledge, as the Son explains in Book X:

Was shee thy God, that her thou didst obey  
 Before his voice, or was shee made thy guide,  
 Superior, or but equal, that to her  
 Thou didst resign thy Manhood, and the Place  
 Wherein God set thee above her made of thee,  
 And for thee, whose perfection far excell'd  
 Hers in all real dignity: Adorn'd  
 She was indeed, and lovely to attract  
 Thy Love, not thy Subjection, and her Gifts  
 Were such as under Government well seem'd,  
 Unseemly to bear rule, which was thy part  
 And person, hadst thou known thyself aright (X 145-56).

The Son's assessment of Adam's fall as a failure in self-knowledge calls attention to the interdependence of knowledge of the self and knowledge of its "image." Adam's failure to

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<sup>8</sup> McColgan notes that it is not only Eve who requires divine guidance to turn away from the pool and towards Adam, whose image she is. Adam admits that, having been transported to Eden, there too "had new begun / My wand'ring" had not God appeared and in so doing turned him towards the one whose image *he* is. McColgan asks, with justification, "could we not assume that, without guidance, Adam would still be wandering?" (32).

comprehend and correctly evaluate the nature or role of either God or Eve equates to a failure to comprehend and evaluate his own nature and role.<sup>9</sup> In falling, he not only confuses Eve's place in their relationship but also his own. The Son's question, "Was shee ... made thy guide, / Superior" (X 145-47), suggests both a false attribution of superiority to Eve and by implication the false subordination of that self that was "set above her." Besides this confusion of their roles in their relationship to each other, in eating the fruit in order to stay with Eve, Adam has incorrectly evaluated his relationship with her as more important than his relationship with God, in whom – as he recognised in the moments after his creation – "I move and live, / And feel that I am happier than I know" (VIII 280-81). His fall divorces the self from the relationship with God in which it had found true meaning and, having severed his own links with the divine, he can no longer understand Eve as an expression of God's goodness but sees her rather as a "fair defect of Nature." But at the moment of the Fall, deciding to remain with Eve, he declares that "to lose thee were to lose myself" (IX 959), overlooking or ignoring the truth that to maintain the "link of Nature" with his other self by sharing in her sin is to lose both himself and God.

Adam's false attribution of superiority to Eve and the concomitant attribution of inferiority to himself points to an inversion of their relationship which, while only explicitly identified some time later by the Son, is nevertheless implicit in the Fall. The theme of narcissism is explored perhaps most overtly in Eve's account of her nativity

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<sup>9</sup> Satan's fall centres upon a similar failure in self-knowledge. In his soliloquy in Book IV, in a moment of lucidity, he outlines his relationship with God as it should have been:

He deserv'd no such return  
From me, whom he created what I was  
In that bright eminence, and with his good  
Upbraided none; nor was his service hard.  
What could be less than to afford him praise,  
The easiest recompense, and pay him thanks,  
How due! (42-48).

Here he identifies, much as Adam does, his dependence upon God for existence and his duty to praise God for that existence, critical elements in self-knowledge. In falling, this self-knowledge fails. Satan sees this "easiest recompense" as a "Yoke" (V 786) and denies his dependence upon God by asserting that he is self-generated: "We know no time when we were not as now; / Know none before us, self-begot, self-rai'd / By our own quick'ning power" (V 859-61). Satan's fall and dislocation from God in whose service he was properly fulfilled provides Adam with "a powerful demonstration of the tragedy of the self-enclosed individual" (MacCallum *Sons* 142-43).

when, waking after her creation, she discovers her image in the water as does Narcissus, a "Shape within the wat'ry gleam," and exchanges looks of "sympathy and love" with her own reflection.<sup>10</sup> But here the dangers of incipient narcissism are averted: she yields to Adam's hand and does not lie down on the bank to pine away "with vain desire." She is a Narcissus who recognises the difference between truth and shadow and, in turning away from her self-image to the other whose image she is, discovers a new, productive relationship that is oriented towards life rather than death and, paradoxically, will enable her own self-reflection in the medium of living beings: Eve will "bear multitudes like [her]self, and thence be call'd / Mother of human Race" (IV 474-75).<sup>11</sup> Adam's fall, in which he expresses his thralldom to his "image," continues the Narcissus motif. But whereas Eve avoided Narcissus' fate, Adam's decision to share her doom mirrors the Narcissus' story more closely:

Certain my resolution is to Die;  
How can I live without thee, how forgo  
Thy sweet Converse and Love so dearly join'd,  
To live again in these wild Woods forlorn? IX 907-910

The passage is rich in allusion. Narcissus longed for physical death; Adam chooses spiritual death in order to remain with the beloved image.<sup>12</sup> In both instances death is precipitated by the inability of the self to sever itself from the image "so dearly join'd." And it is surely the intrusion of the Narcissus story into *Paradise Lost* that underlies Adam's substitution of "wild woods" for the Garden of Eden. The transformation of Paradise to "wild woods" is in itself surprising, but Milton's use of the Narcissus story evinces more surprising transformations. Narcissus dies, unable to divorce himself from

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<sup>10</sup> "There was a clear pool....Its peace was undisturbed by bird or beast or falling branches. Around it was a grassy sward, kept ever green by the nearby waters....Narcissus...lay down here: for he was attracted by the beauty of the place, and by the spring. While he sought to quench his thirst, another thirst grew in him, and as he drank, he was enchanted by the beautiful reflection that he saw" (Ovid *Metamorphoses* III 408-18). Ovid's clear, tranquil pool and green bank find clear echoes in Milton's "liquid Plain" that "stood unmov'd" beside a "green bank."

<sup>11</sup> "The extension of the imagery of copying suggests the channeling of sterile Ovidian Narcissism into procreation which will mirror and extend God's originally Narcissistic creation" (Kilgour 13).

<sup>12</sup> "I have no quarrel with death, for in death I shall forget my pain" *Metamorphoses* III 472. Kilgour draws attention to Adam's narcissism in the Fall: "Realizing what Eve has done, Adam regresses into a Narcissus who cries that he will follow her example" (7).

his image; Adam dies spiritually for the same reason, but in falling he inverts the relationship between self and image and, subordinating himself to one who should properly be subordinate to him, becomes her image. By eating the fruit, Eve has become “to Death devote.” In sharing her sin, Adam, too, becomes a devotee of Death, recreated, as it were, in the image of Eve.

This inversion hinges upon those problems we identified in Adam’s relationship with Eve in Book VIII. Now, in Book IX, his misapprehension of Nature and his tendency to forget that the physical is a reflection of the internal, both in terms of Eve’s existence as an image of himself and in terms of the correlation between her physical and spiritual beauty, inform his decision to fall. Articulating his intention to imitate her sin, Adam twice refers to Nature as the force underpinning their union:

I feel

The Link of Nature draw me: Flesh of Flesh,  
Bone of my Bone thou art (IX 913-15).

So forcible within my heart I feel  
The Bond of Nature draw me to my own,  
My own in thee, for what thou art is mine;  
Our State cannot be sever’d, we are one,  
One Flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself (955-59).

Critically, in both instances Adam fails to identify their inner, spiritual interdependence. Forgetting that they are also “one Soul” (or were, for Eve is no longer his spiritual image), he focuses entirely upon their physical interdependence, mentioning only the substantial unity of flesh and bone and identifying this as the “bond of Nature.” Whether he here understands Nature as “the essence of a thing” or as “the general law which is the origin of every thing and under which every thing acts,” the “bond of Nature” should, as we have seen, also draw him to God. The essence of everything, and particularly the essence of Eve, derives from and draws the observer to God. Eve’s nature as “Heav’n’s last, best gift” informs her physical being, lending grace to her steps, Heaven to her eye, and dignity and love to every gesture. In Book VIII Adam was able to perceive this spiritual reality in the external form. Had Eve still been “Part of [his] Soul” he would not now be faced with the necessity of choice: the “bond of Nature” drawing him to Eve would draw him simultaneously to God, reaffirming the interrelationship of the self, the image and the

divine, for “God and Nature bid the same” (VI 176). Given that he is faced with choice, “sudden apprehension” should have come to his assistance, drawing him to God rather than to Eve by the “link of Nature” that in Book VIII led him to an instinctive understanding of the dependence of his own existence upon “some Great Maker.” That he identifies the Nature as a force drawing him towards Eve and away from the Creator is only made possible by his failure to recall the critical spiritual mirroring that had been part of his relationship with Eve and his own reliance upon God as the source of his being.

Of course, Adam does not identify Eve as the mirror of his soul because, fallen, she no longer is. In this interim where she is fallen and he is still innocent, it is impossible for him to identify in her his spiritual image, and so the image for which, Narcissus-like, he resolves to die is a physical mirror only, as ineffectual to offer true “Converse and Love” as the image in the pool is incapable of returning the “looks / Of sympathy and love” that could fulfil Eve’s need for a respondent other. Eve no longer expresses “Grace in all her steps, Heav’n in her eye,” and Adam, spiritually and physically God’s image, cannot hope to find true correspondence in this shattered image of himself. When he looks for “my own in thee,” all he can find is the physical: “we are one, / One flesh.” But if Eve is no longer his true image, in resolving to become like her, Adam reverses their roles and recreates himself, or is recreated, in the image of Eve, becoming the mirror of her fallen self.

This mirroring begins in verbal echoes. Resolving her internal debate whether to keep the fruit to herself or to share it with Adam, Eve decides that “Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe” (IX 831). Adam cannot have overheard and yet the decision itself affects his speech. He echoes her earlier words in his own resolution that “from thy State / Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe” (915). Both consider the creation of another Eve and reject that alternative. Eve calls the possibility of life without Adam a “death to think” (830); Adam asks “How can I live without thee” (908). Both reach a “resolution.” Both choose death with the other rather than life alone. Eve’s “So dear I love him, that with him all deaths / I could endure, without him live no life” (832-33) finds correspondence in Adam’s “if Death / Consort with thee, Death is to mee as Life” (953-54). It is as if, in the moments before the inversion of their relationship, Adam plays out the part of Echo in the Narcissus story, and through this verbal mimicry develops the dependence upon Eve that he then presents as the imperative to become her image, “submitting to what seem’d remediless” (919). Until the moment of his eating, he still has free choice to find an

alternative: the situation only seems remediless. But his words to Raphael in Book VIII have already betrayed his struggle to establish a relationship with this other that does not impinge upon the nature and responsibilities of his self. Now, in his decision, Adam yields primacy to Eve, becoming the echo that was prefigured in his admission that "Authority and Reason on her wait, / As one intended first, not after made / Occasionally" (VIII 554-56).

In falling, Adam resigns to Eve the superior place reserved for the one of whom and for whom the "likeness" is made. The Son's repeated reference to Eve as "made" reaffirms her rightful place in the triangular relationship: she is a created thing, not the Creator; she is made inferior, not superior. But her response to Adam's decision to fall continues the theme of creation as a mirroring of the self in a parody of the Creator's response to Adam's perfected knowledge of himself and God in Book VIII. There God called his conversation with Adam a "trial," designed to elicit Adam's self-knowledge and his understanding of his spirit as God's "image." Eve represents her temptation of Adam as a "glorious trial" (IX 961) in which Adam, "engaging me to emulate" (963) speaks of their "Union" (964). Where Adam could only identify the material correspondence between himself and fallen Eve, Eve finds not only physical interdependence but also the mirroring of the internal, spiritual reality, addressing him as "Adam, from whose dear side I boast me sprung, / And gladly of our Union hear thee speak, / One Heart, one Soul" (965). Adam has not, in fact, spoken of their union of heart and soul. He cannot, for they are no longer spiritually united. Eve, still his image in an outward sense, no longer mirrors his soul. Nor is she any longer the image of her "glorious Maker." Inner grace no longer informs her steps, nor is heaven in her eyes, but as she meets Adam near the Tree of Knowledge "in her face excuse / Came Prologue" (853-54) and her cheeks are flushed with "distemper" (887). But Eve, determined that Adam shall eat and share her fate, projects the outcome of his fall back upon the present, identifying a unity that they will share once he has eaten the fruit. As God introduces concepts of "knowing" and "understanding" as imperatives in his conversation with Adam and thus enables Adam to assimilate and utilise these abilities, so Eve reintroduces the concept of spiritual unity, offering Adam a means of restoring the inner mirroring that he is temporarily unable to identify in their relationship.

In Eve's fall two sides of the triangular relationship between the self, the image and the divine have been broken: the relationship between Eve and God and that between



Eve and Adam. All that remains is Adam's relationship with God. Upon awakening after his creation, it was an intuitive understanding of this relationship that motivated his search for answers to the question of his own being: "Tell me, how may I know him, how adore, / From whom I have that thus I move and live" (VIII 280-81). But in falling, the purpose of existence he instinctively grasped in the moments after his creation is superseded by his resolution to remain with Eve. His existence, once acknowledged to be dependent upon God, is now argued to be dependent upon Eve. He confuses Eve and God, image and source, death and life and, recreated in the image of Eve, "to Death devote," he loses himself.

In *Paradise Lost* Adam's positive development in self-knowledge can be traced in his changing discourse as interaction with God enables him to move from verbs of external perception towards an understanding of internal truths; the Fall constitutes a failure in that self-knowledge. In *The Tragedy of Man*, however, the Fall marks the beginning of the possibility of self-knowledge and the ongoing development of knowledge is stimulated by Adam's interaction with Lucifer. His awareness of his instinctual existence and of the limitations of that existence – conditions identified by Adam himself in *Paradise Lost*, where he speaks of his "quick instinctual motion" and his uneasy awareness of his lack of concrete knowledge about the world – is prompted only in conversation with Lucifer. In fact, it is Lucifer who, paralleling the role of the "voice of air" in the Csokonai poem, brings the limitations of the instinctual existence to Adam's attention, and it is only after his fall into self-knowledge that he is able to recognise (and briefly regret) the instinctual state he has rejected. If God plays the pedagogue in *Paradise Lost*, Lucifer steps in as relieving teacher in *The Tragedy of Man*.

We have already noted that until the incursion of Lucifer into the Garden, Adam does not identify God by name or refer to him conclusively as the Creator. In response to God's urging him away from the Trees of Knowledge and Life and delineating for him the conditions of choice that now exist because of the presence of the "más szellem" [different spirit], Adam observes that it is a "csodás parancs, de úgy látszik, komoly," that is, "a strange [or wondrous] behest but, apparently, serious." While Szirtes, Mark and McLeod all translate "csodás parancs" as "strange command," the Hungarian does not exclude the possibility that it is the delivery of the behest by some invisible and unidentified speaker that Adam finds wondrous, as much as its actual content. Be that as it may, he does not

identify God as the source of the wondrous behest; he decides on his behalf and Eve's that they will "obey the voice," not "obey the Lord." It is not until line 236 that he first identifies God by name and here he is prompted by Lucifer's suggestion that in his state of dependence upon divine providence, he has no need for conscious thought. His response illustrates the extent of his reliance upon instinctual awareness rather than on reasoned intellectualism:

Of consciousness? Am I not conscious, then?

Do I not feel the sunshine's blessing,

The sweet bliss of existence,

And my Lord's unending grace

That made me this earth's lord? (233-37)

Adam's definition of *eszmél*ni [to be conscious] identifies a simple state of consciousness based on feeling – he feels the sun's kind rays, he feels the sweet bliss of living and the unending graciousness of his God. Interestingly, the correlation of feeling or experiencing and understanding will be made more strongly and consistently by Eve. At this stage, however, Lucifer has only just entered the Garden of Eden and the division between Adam and Eve that will become more pronounced through Scene 2 as they approach the moment of the Fall is as yet negligible. More important at this point is the fact that until this moment Adam has not referred to God by name.

Equally important, if not of greater significance, is the corresponding fact that this reference to God is triggered by Lucifer's assertion that there is much Adam does not know. Unlike his counterpart in *Paradise Lost*, Madách's Adam exhibits no thirst for knowledge until he enters into conversation with Lucifer. In confessing to Lucifer that he "did not know" that other people existed, he demonstrates no dissatisfaction with this state of not knowing. At the beginning of Scene 2 Adam and Eve are aware of their privileged position within the created world – or rather, within the existent world, for they betray no realisation that their world is created or has not always been as it is now. In accepting the reality of their present situation, they identify specifically the pleasures of existence and of lordship of the world, and an awareness of benevolent guardians watching over them. Adam identifies lordship over the world, but even he is naively unaware of the workings of nature: "enough that things are as they are" (172) is both the sum of his knowledge and an expression of his lack of curiosity about the created world. Unlike Milton's Adam, who is aware of the quantitative difference between feeling and knowledge ("I feel that I

am happier than I know”), Madách’s Adam is content with an instinctual state in which feeling equates to conscious thought. He does not intuit the existence of some “great Maker” from his own existence, for the process of creation lies beyond the limits of human comprehension and, in the absence of an account of creation by a sociable archangel and the absence of a God who identifies himself as “Whom thou sought’st.../...Author of all this thou seest,” Adam has no access to information about creation, the Creator or himself until Lucifer supplies it. Knowledge and Life are the two trees given to Lucifer and it is the interrelationship of the two that he explores in the argument he presents to Adam.

In Scene 1 Lucifer characterises himself as the gap between God’s ideas and their manifestation in physical form, and as such is the force of un-being against which all creation was formed. In the human realm he continues to act as a catalyst by engendering in Adam an awareness of the absence of knowledge and, later, an awareness of the gap between desire and realisation. In the human domain, however, Lucifer’s catalytic influence takes the form of *értelem* – that activity of man’s cognitive faculty that is capable of logical thought, critical analysis and evaluation. A fuller definition reads:

Az ember megismerő tevékenységének legmagasabb foka, a logikus gondolkodás képessége, amely feltárja a jelenségek mivoltát és összefüggéseit, a természet és a társadalom fejlődésének törvényeit, és ezeket tudatosan, célszerűen felhasználja a természet és a társadalom átalakítására....<Az ösztönnel, érzelemmel szemben> tudatos gondolkodás, ész (*A magyar nyelv értelmező szótára*).

[The highest degree of man’s cognitive faculty, his ability for logical thought, that reveals the nature and interconnection of events, the laws of natural and social evolution, and deploys these consciously and effectively for the transformation of nature and society; conscious reflection (in contradistinction to instinct and sentience).]

*Értelem*, loosely used, can denote a static state or potentiality but Lucifer is never a static entity and in fact continually strives against stasis. It is important to note that while he characterises himself as both *tagadás* [negation or denial] and *értelem* [intellect], he maintains a precise distinction between the two. In Scene 1 he explains to God that as “a *tagadás* ősi szelleme” (123) [the ancient spirit of negation] he forced awareness of the disparity between the engendering of an idea and its realisation. He uses the term again at

line 150, claiming that “*tagadás*” needs only a foothold in order to subvert the world. In Scene 15 God refers to Lucifer’s “*dőre tagadásod*,” his “foolish denial” (4087). Between these two scenes, there are only two references to Lucifer as *tagadás*, the first in Scene 2 where the angelic chorus pities the world tempted by the “*ős tagadás*” (269) [ancient denial], the second in Scene 3 where Lucifer summons the Spirit of the Earth with the words “*Az ősi tagadás / hív*” (470) [ancient negation summons you]. In every instance the appellation is generated by spiritual beings – God, the angels, Lucifer himself – and nowhere in his transactions with Adam and Eve does Lucifer call himself “negation.” Rather, he characterises himself as *értelem* (199, 945, 4021), as “intellect,” the capacity that differentiates man from animal, and it is by means of intellect that he intends to seduce and ruin mankind.

In Scene 2 Lucifer criticises God’s creation for its lack of *összhangzó értelem* [harmonious meaning], a lack that is inevitable given the Creator’s motives. God, Lucifer claims, made man only to glorify himself, and the imposition of this purpose upon created life robs it of true free will:

You wrote a poem in your own praise,  
 Installed it in this sorry mechanism,  
 And it doesn’t weary you to listen on and on  
 As that ditty plays ad infinitum.  
 Is this toy, over which a childish heart might swell,  
 Worthy of one of such ancient days?  
 Where a small spark kneaded into mud mimics  
 Its lord, no true likeness but a freakish monstrosity,  
 Fate and freewill hound one another,  
 And harmonious meaning is absent (98-107).

If man, the “small spark kneaded into mud,” lacks choice, then his mechanical praise of God is meaningless. Once again, God does not directly rebut Lucifer’s accusation: his “homage only, not censure, is my due” (108) only sidesteps it. The fact that he gives the trees of Life and Knowledge to Lucifer, placing him in the centre of the garden and creating the possibility for contact between the “different spirit” and Adam and Eve suggests that he, too, is aware of the need for choice and free will. Although Lucifer intends to utilise choice to subvert God’s world, moments before his arrival in Eden, God has informed Adam of the existence of choice and delineated for him the attendant

conditions. It is as if God has vacated the classroom, leaving Lucifer to take the lesson, knowing that the lesson is one he can only endorse by his absence.

Lucifer begins by seizing upon Adam's admission of a lack of specific knowledge. As with Milton's Adam, there are things that Madách's Adam does not know before his period of tutelage. The nature of the unknown, however, is significantly different. While Milton's Adam begins by posing questions about his own existence, Madách's Adam expresses the limitations of his knowledge about the existence of others: "I did not know there were others besides us" (224). Lucifer's response, "There are many things you do not know / and never will" (225-26), could not be more different to the subtle educational strategy of Milton's God conducted "as with a smile." Lucifer's educational tactics are entirely, and not surprisingly, negative. Adam is informed that there is much he does not know, God's providence is portrayed as an obstacle to the development of consciousness, and when Adam attempts to reply, formulating his own definition of consciousness, Lucifer refutes his argument with logic and sarcasm that leave Adam dazed. His Miltonic counterpart engages with God in a conversation where both partners share equally in the dialogue: Adam has 48 lines of dialogue to God's 63. In conversation with Lucifer, Adam is outtalked by 19 lines to 78, lines more consistently expressive of his bewilderment and his unwillingness to relinquish his idealism than indicative of his acceptance of Lucifer's arguments. Unlike his Miltonic counterpart, he is given little opportunity to apply the information presented him to his own situation, gradually developing an understanding of the "spirit within" by absorbing and appropriating aspects of the tutor's discourse. Rather, information is applied to his situation for him and conclusions drawn by Lucifer.

Nevertheless, as Adam's development in understanding of his own nature and the nature of God in *Paradise Lost* can be traced in his discourse, so here too a developing knowledge and the particular slant of that knowledge towards realisation of the self can be identified in changes in discourse. In *The Tragedy* what Adam learns is learnt by falling. Before the Fall, his discourse is curiously lacking in grammatical markers of self-promotion. He uses the first person possessive suffix *-m* only twice. The first instance is when he comments to Eve that his own existence (létem 195) finds fuller realisation in hers; the second is the reference to God mentioned above where he first refers to God as "Istenem" [my God]. In both instances the effect of the first person possessive suffix is subtly undermined by the context. In the former the focus is not upon his own existence [létem] but upon the fulfilment of that existence in another, while in the latter the

possessive suffix in “Istenem” seems to be similarly absorbed by the identify of the other and is an early indicator of the idealism that marks Adam’s discourse. Similarly, when Adam expresses lordship over creation, the grammatical structure actually shifts emphasis away from the individuality of possession. In response to Eve’s opening line, Adam does not respond with “And *for me* to be lord over everything” [És *nekem* úrnak lenni mindenek felett] but with a simple repetition of the infinitive without identifying himself in the dative as that ruler: “And to be the master-ruler of the world” (155) [És úrnak lenni mindenek felett]. The implication, of course, is that it is he who is lord over everything but the fact that the text avoids the first person is interesting. When he returns to the theme of governance of the world at line 237 with “God’s infinite grace that made me this earth’s lord” [És Istenemnek végtelen kegyét, / Ki engemet tőn e föld istenévé], the construction presents Adam as the object, not the subject of the sentence, and his godhood over creation as a divine appointment, an act of God, not something that stems from a sense of his individuality. The progression from the simple infinitive at line 155 to the identification of a God who has appointed him ruler of the world in itself comprises progression in knowledge, a knowledge supplied by God who, before warning Adam to avoid the Trees of Knowledge and Life, announces that he has given “the whole world” to Adam. But conversation with Lucifer elicits the recollection; only in response to Lucifer’s challenging him to define conscious thought does Adam utilise this piece of information.

Before the Fall, then, Adam’s discourse is marked by a general absence of emphasis on the centrality of the self. Eating the Fruit of Knowledge brings about a fundamental shift in this pattern of discourse. The balance of the dialogue shifts in Adam’s favour; no longer simply a respondent to Lucifer’s sophistries, it is he who dominates the dialogue of Scene 3, with 96 lines to Lucifer’s 89. More remarkably, although in Scene 2 he has only three lines after the Fall, in these three lines he uses the possessive suffix -m twice and emphatically. The first, “ébredésem” [my awakening], is used to express his newly-discovered self-awareness: “Csak ébredésem borzongása ez” (27) [this is only the first shudder of my awakening]. The second, “hölgyem,” literally “my lady,” could be taken as formulaic rather than expressing a strong sense of the possessive, but it is surely significant that until this point Adam has addressed Eve only by her name (160, 173, 191) and as “nő” (175) [woman]. The increase in the use of the possessive becomes more marked in the opening lines of Scene 3. Here Adam’s dialogue is replete not only with possessives but with the repeated use of verbs in the first person singular – “enyém”

[mine], “otthonom” [my home], “birok” [I own it], “megvédem” [I will protect it], “kényszerítem nekem” [I will oblige it (to bear fruit) for me] – illustrating the extent and aggressive nature of his newly discovered self-awareness. His very first words, the emphatic “Ez az enyém” (342) [this is mine], contrast sharply with his equivocal expressions of lordship in Scene 2. His next two speeches continue and clarify this development: he has become a god unto himself and desires greatness, a desire that echoes the goals Lucifer set up for his putative world in Scene 2:

Önmagam levék

Enistenemmé, és amit kívívok,

Méltán enyém. Erőm ez, s büszkeségem (362-4).

It is difficult to retain in translation the effect of the cumulative use of the first person possessive suffix and the emphatic personal prefix in the first clause. A word for word translation would read, “I myself have become / my very own god.” Szirtes’ “My God is me” (43), though perhaps less accurate than Mark’s “I have become a god unto myself” (31) captures much of the emphatic spirit of the original. The rest of the quotation reads, “and what I conquer / is worthily mine. This is my strength and my pride.” In abandoning God, Adam has discovered himself and an ability to convey in language concepts of selfhood and to project the self onto the external world. Unlike Milton’s Adam who agonises over the consequences of the Fall and identifies his previous unfallen innocence as a good that can never be retrieved, this Adam revels in the consequences of falling and it is not until interaction with Lucifer demonstrates the flawed logic of his boasts that he regrets, even momentarily, the lost instinctual state.

What follows in Scene 3 comprises a continuation of Adam’s tutelage and establishes the necessity for the dream sequence. For, as in *Paradise Lost*, the dream sequence is imperative and it is only within its context that Adam can reach the “sum of wisdom,” to borrow Michael’s phrase: in *The Tragedy* before he can reach a knowledge of man’s relationship to God he must arrive at a knowledge of the self. The self-awareness that Adam glories in during the first lines of Scene 3 is shown by Lucifer to be only the first step towards knowledge. The limitations of an individual’s existence determine the extent of his ability to know and Adam quickly discovers the limitations of his self. The fine thread of physical existence binds the individual to his physical body, determining his horizons, and for the first time Adam becomes aware of the paradoxical nature of his being as divine ideal incarnate, the “small spark kneaded into mud.” He cannot know

beyond the limitations of his being, cannot spy the secrets of the far-away (391). Like the grub, the eagle or the mole of Lucifer's similes in Scene 2, Adam's awareness of himself is circumscribed by his inability to gather knowledge of what lies beyond his own experience. "Grub equals god" is not an accurate equation but the grub has no means of reassessing its conclusion because the limitations of its physical existence deny it a wider frame of reference. Adam's sense of godhood, however, is shattered by the glimpse Lucifer gives him into the workings of nature. The instability of matter undermines his claims, founded as they were in his physical possession of the physical world. His awareness of his own mortality and of the existence of forces beyond his experience lead directly to his impatient desire to "know all" (506). Ultimately he is indeed constrained by his physical existence, a constraint that is underlined by God in Scene 15, but by presenting the existence of the individual as part of a continuum of the human essence, Lucifer offers him a different framework for existence – not matter, which is unreliable and transitory, but history. Adam's desire to see into his future is the only way he has of stepping beyond the limits of his individual perception and reaching a deeper understanding of himself.



## Chapter 4

### Knowing Death

The traditional association of death with knowledge as the penalty for eating the Fruit results in a surprising development in the Anglo-Saxon version of the Fall found in the Junius Manuscript. There the tree is referred to not as the Tree of Knowledge but consistently as the “Tree of Death.” This is an extreme example of the erosion of the distinction between the forbidden object and the penalty for disobedience, a distinction that most versions of the Fall antecedent to *Paradise Lost* maintain. While in some the fruit itself is deadly, others follow the tradition, later upheld by Milton, that the Tree comprises a “Sacrament...of Good and Ill.”<sup>1</sup> However, while death is more properly the consequence of disobedience rather than an inherent property of the fruit, God’s pronouncement that “in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” places knowledge and death in juxtaposition and in so doing establishes an interrelationship between them. Eating, Adam gains knowledge of death. While *Paradise Lost* and *The Tragedy of Man* explore the concept of death and Adam’s knowledge of death in ostensibly different ways, beneath the obvious dissimilarities lies a surprising correspondence: in both accounts Adam’s understanding of death is not an end in itself but is necessary to his continuing growth in knowledge, and it is only through exposure to death that he realises the “sum of wisdom.”

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<sup>1</sup> Du Bartas *La Seconde Semaine* 65. Du Bartas consistently represents the tree as “a sure pledge, a sacred signe, and seal” (64). The virtue of the fruit, when eaten, is divisive; much as in *Paradise Lost* it imparts a knowledge of “good lost and evil got” (XI 87). Du Bartas’ Tree of Knowledge would reveal

What ods there is between still peace, and strife;  
 God’s wrath, and love; drad death, and dearest life;  
 Solace, and sorrow; guile, and innocence;  
 Rebellious pride, humble obedience (64).

For an example of the fruit as deadly, see Avitus, where the fruit possesses deadly virtue or represents death and is referred to as “the dish of conquering death,” “a poisonous dower,” (14) “sweet poison.../And grim death” (13). In *Christian Doctrine* Milton insists that “it was necessary that one thing at least should be either forbidden or commanded, and above all something which was in itself neither good nor evil, that man’s obedience might in this way be made evident” (*Works* VI 352).

Logically, death should be incomprehensible in the prelapsarian world. Existing only as the penalty for disobedience, it must lie beyond the experiential knowledge of beings who have not yet disobeyed, a point that is overlooked by some of Milton's antecedents. In *Adamus Exul*, for instance, Adam announces to Satan that "Between us there shall be the sort / Of sympathetic pact that links the lamb and wolf" (151), an assertion that implies an anachronistic understanding not only of death but of the existence of an enmity between predator and prey that is completely out of place in innocent Eden. Milton, re-establishing the impossibility of death in Paradise before the Fall, has his carnivores "gambol" before Adam and Eve, while "Sporting the Lion ramp'd, and in his paw / Dandl'd the Kid" (IV 343-4). While death is present in imagery – Satan, for instance, approaches Adam and Eve in the guise of a stalking tiger "who chose his ground / Whence rushing he might surest seize them both / Gript in each paw" (IV 406-8) – such imagery is confined to the narrative and does not intrude into Adam and Eve's dialogue nor into the reality of Eden as they perceive it. Understanding of death is required only of the reader, not of unfallen man. From Adam's perspective, tigers in Eden do not stalk their prey but only "gambol," and presumably he does not see Satan's approach as the crouching tiger. In this way, the imagery becomes a device for underlining the difference between the unfallen and the fallen world, imposing the conditions of the fallen world upon the text and surrounding innocence with danger. The gambolling tiger is supplanted by the stalking tiger, which intrudes into the narrative, entering not only the text but Eden itself, although in a way that is only appreciable from the external point of view of the fallen reader. Represented by the stalking predator, the conditions of the fallen world impinge upon the unfallen world: death has not yet entered Eden as the consequence of sin but nevertheless is present.

Adam's inability to recognise the crouching tiger underlines the impossibility of his understanding death in the prelapsarian state. In relating the injunction against the Tree of Knowledge to Eve, he expresses a lack of certainty about the nature of death, qualifying his explanation of God's command with the words "whate'er Death is, / Some dreadful thing no doubt" (IV 425-6). Not until after the Fall does experiential knowledge of death become possible. Then his knowledge of death – or, ironically, his lack of knowledge – becomes the focal point of the narrative, generating psychological conflict and, eventually, repentance. In earlier Renaissance versions of the Fall story, Death is treated by and large as an allegorical figure. While in *Adamus Exul* Death and its hellish attendants are visible

to Adam only as “phantoms of delirium,” in *L’Adamo* and *Adamo Caduto* Death features among the dramatis personae and participates in the dialogue and dramatic action. In *Paradise Lost* Death makes a cameo appearance as the son of Sin and Satan and actually enters Paradise after the Fall, but as an allegorical figure it has no contact with Adam, and Milton’s concern in relation to Adam’s understanding of death is to investigate the psychological and spiritual consequences of sin.

Physical death in terms of the dissolution of the body does not follow immediately upon eating the fruit but as a loss of physical perfection it is instantly apparent. As noted in the chapter on Eve, when she approaches Adam after eating the fruit, internal, spiritual beauty no longer irradiates her physical form but rather “in her face excuse / Came Prologue” (IX 853-54) and her cheeks were flushed with “distemper” (887). Adam recognises this loss of purity not only in Eve but also in himself when he identifies “in our Faces evident the signs / Of foul concupiscence” (IX 1077-78). Visible already in the moments after the Fall, the alteration of their “looks Divine” in which “The image of their glorious Maker shone” (IV 290-91) continues, until when they present themselves before the Son what is evident in their faces is guilt, shame, perturbation, despair, anger, obstinacy, hate, and guile (X 112-14). Outer form still reflects inner reality, but the inner reality that is now projected into their faces is that of death.

In *Christian Doctrine* Milton defines four degrees of death, the first of which, guiltiness, includes “all evils which tend to death and which, it is agreed, came into the world as soon as man fell,” as well as this “lessening of majesty of the human countenance” (*Works* VI 393). It involves terrors of conscience, the loss of divine protection and favour, and degradation of the mind. Fallen Adam and Eve become subject to anger, hate, mistrust, suspicion, and discord (IX 1123-24). Such physical symptoms of death and degradation are the results of what Milton identifies as the second degree of death: spiritual death through the loss of their “innate righteousness,” which again took place “at the same moment as the fall of man, not merely on the same day” (*Works* VI 394). Adam’s acquaintance with death begins with this spiritual death and its manifestation both in the physical changes evident in their faces and in their psychological perturbation. Love, forwarded as a reason to join Eve in sin, is one of the first fatalities of death. Having fallen, Adam discovers that the “link of Nature” he fell to maintain is also shattered. Love is perverted to carnal desire and lust, conjugal unity is replaced by mutual recriminations, and, “estrang’d in look and alter’d style” (IX 1132), he and Eve are no

longer “imparadis’t in one another’s arms” (IV 506). But Adam fails to identify these changes as symptomatic of death. In Book XI he asks why God delays

His hand to execute what his Decree  
Fix’d on this day? Why do I overlive,  
Why am I mock’t with death, and length’n’d out  
To deathless pain? (771-75)

As yet he conceives of death as a single act, the extermination of existence. But the decree has already been executed in his loss of “innate righteousness” and in the psychological torments he suffers as a result of sin.

Although at the moment of the Fall “Earth trembl’d from her entrails” (IX 1000), not until after Death and Sin arrived in Paradise do the effects of the Fall become evident in the natural world. Those created things that had once praised God simply by being are now altered at God’s command “as best sorted with present things” (X 651). The earth is tipped on its axis and Discord, first manifest in the cold and heat, winds and thunder that result from this disturbance of natural equilibrium, also introduces to the animate creation “Death through fierce antipathy” (709). Carnivores no longer dandle the young of prey species in their paws but devour them instead.

This narrative progression from the psychological and physiognomic effects of death to its visible effects in creation is reflected in and actually enables Adam’s growing understanding of what death is. In resolving to fall with Eve, he claims that “if Death / Consort with thee, Death is to mee as Life” (IX 953-54). Although aware of the spiritual and physical changes he has undergone as a result of sin, changes that have stripped him of innocence, faith and purity, and leave him unable to bear to look on God or angels “with their blaze / Insufferably bright” (1083-84), he has not identified these changes as constituting death. Before the incursion of Death into Eden as a *dramatis persona*, he mentions it only once and not to acknowledge his condition as “to Death devote” but in reference to his choice to fall when he reminds Eve that he “willingly chose rather Death with thee” (IX 1167). At this stage he expresses no true comprehension of what death entails. It exists as a fact; it is the penalty of disobedience. But Adam has not experienced it and it is not until he sees its physical manifestation as discord among the elements and “fierce antipathy” between the animals, that he identifies his own fallen state as one that is subject to physical death. He has seen the dissolution of the physical body as animals prey on one another and now understands what death of the body means: as “earth insensible”

he would “lay me down / As in my Mother’s lap” (X 777-78), decomposing to the dust of which he was originally created. This understanding of the nature of physical death actually enters his discourse as a point of reference. Remembering God’s command to increase and multiply, he now calls it “death to hear” (731), an evaluation that would have been impossible in his unfallen state when he had no experiential knowledge of death; impossible, too, in the interim between the Fall and the arrival of Death in Eden, when he experienced the “evils which tend to death” without making a connection between those evils and death itself.

Adam’s understanding of death, however, is not yet complete and will not be until Michael’s visions and narrative reveal the ways in which a being who is both spiritual and physical can die, and enable him to identify death as his “final remedy” (XI 62). In the meantime, having seen the dissolution of the physical body, he struggles to make sense of the physical death of a being into whom God has breathed spirit. He recognises that it was the spirit of man that sinned (X 782-92) and as such must bear the punishment of death, but supposes this to entail an end much like the demise of the physical body: “All of me then shall die” (792). The result of this debate over the nature of death is his realisation that death is not confined to the immediate demise of the physical body but is an ongoing process, “a slow-pac’t evil, / A long day’s dying” (X 963-64). But without Michael’s tutelage he is unable to identify the spiritual consequences of death and, tellingly, when he proposes that they should return to the place of judgement and confess their faults, it is in the hope that God will ameliorate the physical effects of death in the material world:

How much more, if we pray him, will his ear  
Be open, and his heart to pity incline  
And teach us further by what means to shun

Th’inclement Seasons, Rain, Ice, Hail and Snow (X 1060-63).

God, seeing them “soft’n’d and with tears / Bewailing their excess” (XI 110-11) does respond. His ear is “open” and his heart inclined to teach Adam further. But the instruction he imparts through Michael is designed to address not the symptoms of sin in the material world but rather the spiritual implications of the Fall. It is only through understanding spiritual death that Adam can eventually gain the “sum of wisdom,” identifying death as the “Gate of Life” and be dismissed from Eden “sorrowing, yet in peace.”

The centrality of death to the ultimate solution in which the consequences of falling are remedied or at least ameliorated finds an unexpected echo in *The Tragedy of*

*Man*. While Madách does not explore the spiritual consequences of a severance of man from his Creator, death plays a pivotal role in Adam's developing self-knowledge. In *The Tragedy* death is relegated to the background during the temptation and Fall. Adam does not query its nature and although God explains the consequences of eating the fruit of the Trees of Life and Knowledge at line 165, the penalty of death is nowhere reiterated in Scene 2. It is implicit in Eve's "Végünk van" [This is the end of us] but God, responding to their eating of the fruit, pronounces abandonment rather than death. The degrees of death identified by Milton in *Christian Doctrine*, which "came into the world as soon as man fell," are nowhere evident in *The Tragedy*: conjugal disharmony, carnal desire, guilt, shame, perturbation, despair, anger, obstinacy, hate, and guile, do not mark the fallen state of Madách's Adam and Eve. Rather than falling to mutual recriminations, outside Eden they reconstruct their former state as best they can, taking pride respectively in their mastery of creation and potential for motherhood. Nor, again, does discord wreak havoc in the animate and inanimate world. Instead, it is in himself that Adam first discovers death.

In eating the fruit and in God's abandonment of him Adam feels the "first shudder of [his] awakening" and subsequently bases his self-godhood upon the fact of his existence, identifying in himself "an independent, self-sufficient whole" (412-13). Only when Lucifer permits him to see the world with spirit-vision and he experiences the instability of matter, including the matter of his own physical being, does he become aware of his mortality:

Oh, amidst this whirl of confusion  
 what will become of my accomplished selfhood,  
 what will become of you, my body,  
 in whom, in my grand designs and great desires,  
 I placed such foolish trust as a sturdy tool? (431-35)

Paradoxically, this realisation of the potential for dissolution of his own body acts as a stimulant in the pursuit of knowledge rather than a deterrent. He understands that the process of living cannot delay death but rather precipitates it: "My every word, each thought that passes through my mind, expends a fraction of my being" (442-43). Death is inseparable from life and his awareness of his mortality drives him to "know everything":

For you to speak of patience is easy:  
 Life unending lies spread out before you.

But I have not eaten of the Tree of Life.

Existence is brief. It bids me haste (513-6).

The allocation of the Trees of Knowledge and Life to Lucifer means that life, death and knowledge are interrelated in *The Tragedy* in a way unparalleled in previous versions of the Fall story. Both knowledge and life will lead to death (“avoid *these two* trees.../...he who tastes it will surely die” 163-65). Now, through interaction with Lucifer, Adam discovers that knowledge is located between, and determined by, life and death. If the possibility of knowledge is limited by the barriers of the individual existence, as Lucifer argues in Scene 2 with reference to “eagle,” “mole” and “grub,” and if the boundaries of the physical prevent the individual from spying the “secrets of the far-away,” the pursuit of knowledge is necessitated by the inevitability of death. The urgency of Adam’s demand to know increases throughout Scene 3 as his experience of death becomes more immediate. It is the irreconcilability of the divine kneaded into mud, the paradox of immortality bounded by mortality, that drives the imperative to know.

Milton’s Adam agonises over the nature of death after the Fall and his growing understanding of what death constitutes spiritually as well as physically is – or will be – essential to his attainment of “the sum of wisdom.” While the interrelationship of death and knowledge are of equal importance in *The Tragedy*, rather than exploring the impact of this interrelationship on Adam through dialogue, Madách chooses to explore it through the dramatic structure of his poem. Most obviously, Adam ages as he journeys through the dream sequence from youth to old age, from instinctual innocence to maturity in self-knowledge. But more interesting is the dramatic presence of death in each scene. Death not only provides the impetus towards the search for knowledge in Scene 3, where Adam becomes aware of the precarious nature of matter itself, but is present in each scene as a pivot around which ideals are espoused and discarded, propelling him forward through the dream sequence. In Egypt the dying slave brings him face to face with Eve, in Greece demagogues are buying for Adam’s blood, in Rome Hippias dies from the plague, and in Constantinople heretics are burning. In each instance the intrusion of death marks the moment of the redefinition of the ideal. Although it is through Eve that Adam as Pharaoh is enabled to feel and experience the world beyond the self, the words of the dying slave prompt him to begin questioning the ideal of eternal glory, while the slave’s death creates the opportunity for him to elevate Eve to the throne and for the process of disillusionment and redefinition to continue. In Greece the death-sentence pronounced by the city he has

given his life to protect makes him realise “mi dőre a szabadság / Melyért egy éltén küszködém keresztül” (1028-29) [how foolish is that liberty / to which I gave a whole lifetime of struggle]. Hippias’s death, coinciding with the arrival of the Apostle Peter and his offer of salvation through baptism and the holy love of God, prompts Adam to renounce the life of pleasure and adopt a new ideal. As a knight of the Holy Sepulchre in Constantinople, Adam’s idealism is evident in his discourse: he uses the word “szent” [holy] ten times during Scene 7, six times in quick succession between lines 1390 and 1462, and again at 1516 and at 1549. But the “holy love” that Adam had hoped would bring “a new people and a new ideal to the world” (1341) has been perverted in the debate between the Church and the Heretics, and is offered as a pretext for the murder of women and children:

My son,  
he who pampers the body does not show love,  
but he who leads the soul back, across the  
sword’s edge or through flames, if need be,  
to Him who said, “I bring not peace unto the earth  
but war” (1536-40).

After the Patriarch’s words and the perversion of the ideal, Adam uses “szent” only twice more, once as the attribute of the Virgin Mary (1739) and finally when he renounces the ideal of holy love.

The centrality of death to the dramatic action and to Adam’s developing knowledge continues. There are burning heretics in the background in the first Prague scene and, interestingly, the very background nature of their demise is reflected in the stagnation of the Prague society: death has lost its immediacy and society suffers.<sup>2</sup> In Paris Eve is killed and Adam is in danger of being beheaded. In Prague II the courtier plots to

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<sup>2</sup> Lucifer draws attention to the catalytic effect of death upon the ideal. Commenting on the fire on which the heretics are being burnt, he says:

But I’m afraid it will die down soon,  
Not doused by manly resolution,  
Nor to yield room to new opinions;  
But there’s no one in this indifferent age  
To throw fresh logs into the embers,  
And I may freeze. Alas, the collapse of every



murder Adam. The London Scene concludes with the death of society in the *danse macabre*, while in the Phalanstery nature itself has begun to die, and in the Space Scene Adam is faced with death once again. In the Ice World the moon stares behind the fog like “death’s lantern” and the world itself is “terrible,” a giant grave over which nature has flung a shroud (3744, 3758-59). Not only is mankind dying, but the last inhabitants of this world have turned to murdering each other.

While the picture of fallen Adam as pursued by real or imagined harbingers of death was an established trope in Renaissance versions of the Fall, the presence of death throughout the dream sequence in *The Tragedy* represents something different. Nor is it simply a dramatic realisation of the *memento mori* theme. Rather, death provides the context in which knowledge becomes possible, even imperative; it is the pivot about which Adam’s constant revision of the ideal turns. This revision of the ideal increasingly focuses upon the paradox of human existence as the divine spark in mortal matter. The conflict inherent in this paradoxical existence implies, and is realised dramatically in, the struggle between soul and matter. In *Paradise Lost* knowledge of death must be achieved before Adam can fully comprehend the redemptive role of the Son and see death as a means to new, spiritual life. While the “sum of wisdom” Adam reaches in *The Tragedy* is very different, it is his developing understanding of death that leads him repeatedly to revise his understanding of life, until in Scene 13 he arrives at the formulation of the relationship between life and death that will be endorsed by God in the final lines of the poem:

I’ll fail to reach the end a hundred times, I know.  
 What does that matter? And what properly is the end?  
 The end, cessation of honourable strife,  
 The end is death, life is struggle,  
 And man’s end is this struggle in itself. 3698-3702<sup>3</sup>

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great idea is similarly pathetic (1184-90).

<sup>3</sup> An accurate translation of this critical passage is difficult. Madách’s use of “a cél” suggests a variety of meanings that cannot be accurately conveyed in English. The question “A cél voltaképp mi is?” [And what is the cél?] would seem to imply that this multiplicity of meaning is consciously invoked and that the following lines not only explore the goal of life but the possibilities of the word “cél” itself. I have chosen to translate “cél” with the rather archaic “end,” which, I hope, retains the opacity of the original.

In man's existence as the "small spark kneaded into mud," immortality and mortality are united. Life and death define and generate the struggle that takes place between them, itself the purpose of existence. Throughout the poem, death plays a positive role by its very negativity, compelling an awareness of the gap between the conception of the ideal and its realisation, forcing Adam to review and revise his developing understanding of himself. It is knowledge of death that accompanies him offstage at the end of *The Tragedy* (Hubay 1777). As he steps into the dawn of history, restored to youth, the spectre of the dying world is inexpungibly imprinted on his memory and he cries, "Csak az a vég! – Csak azt tudnám feledni!" (4116) [But that end! If only I could forget the end!]. While death never appears as an allegorical figure in *The Tragedy* as it does in *Paradise Lost*, nevertheless through its critical role and its constant presence throughout the dream sequence it becomes another character in Madách's poem, a mute player but an effective one.

## Chapter 5

### “Regaining to Know God Aright”

“Such an untransmuted lump of futurity,” CS Lewis wrote of the final two books of *Paradise Lost*, “coming in a position so momentous for the structural effect of the whole work, is inartistic” (125). Since Lewis’s dismissal of the visions and narratives through which Michael concludes the education of Adam, critical attention has rehabilitated the close of *Paradise Lost*. In part, this criticism has focused on finding parallels between the structure of Michael’s presentation of history and contemporary historical methodology,<sup>1</sup> but such discussions tend to address issues of the reader’s education rather than exploring the significance of the visions within the scope of the poem and how they relate to Adam’s ongoing education. That Milton believed that the external world and history itself provide a means towards self knowledge is evident in the *History of Britain*, where he asserts that a comparison of former times to the present can “raise the knowledg of our selves both great and weighty” (*Works* V i 130). Fields, who finds in *Paradise Lost* a dual development of self-knowledge through introspective self-contemplation and the mirroring of the self in the created world, sees in Books XI and XII the final stage of Adam’s education as he is prompted towards new self-knowledge by the means of Aristotelian externals: “By viewing himself on the world’s stage, Adam becomes

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<sup>1</sup> MacCallum finds in Books XI and XII the six divisions of history identified by Augustine and argues for a “basic pattern of fall, judgement, regeneration, and renewal...repeated cyclically from age to age, each new world being born out of the ruins of the old through the man of faith” (“Sacred History” 150-53). Waddington outlines a more highly detailed structure based on a correspondence of the six visions of Book XI with the six Ages covered in Book XII. Amorose rejects the cyclical pattern inherent in the Classical view of history, as well as the Judeo-Christian tradition of history as a linear progression from the Fall to the Final Judgement (142), and reads these last books as an example of contemporary 17<sup>th</sup> century apocalyptic history, finding a tripartite structure based upon a dialectic. The first age is that of conscience, during which “chosen men rely on an inward, and partial, source” for the moral and political directives from God that guide the individual. The second age is that of law, when “the chosen people come to rely on an external and...incomplete set of guidelines.” These two ages find synthesis in the third age, in which “outward Law and inward conscience are combined, in effect internalising the Law so that the individual soul becomes the most reliable source for knowledge of God’s directives” (148).

aware of the better part of man, his rational powers of discrimination, his aspect of self-like-God" (398).<sup>2</sup>

However, the process is more subtle and complex than Fields's summary would seem to suggest. In fact, the visions and narratives of Books XI and XII present Adam with an opportunity to begin "regain[ing] to know God aright" by involving him in an educational programme designed to facilitate his discovery of the "new spiritual life" that is the result of salvation or engrafting into Christ. Specifically, he is prompted to reconsider those misunderstandings that precipitated, and were precipitated by, the Fall: his misconstruing of the relationship between self, image and God, his failure to appreciate inner reality through external form, and his failure properly to evaluate spiritual truth and external "seeming." The focus of these last books moves steadily away from the physical and temporal to the spiritual and eternal, encouraging Adam towards a "comprehension of spiritual things, and love of holiness" (*Works* XVI 5). They are indeed in a position "momentous for the structural effect of the whole work." They are also hugely important to Adam. Not only is his postlapsarian education designed to repair the ruins of the Fall by enabling him to reformulate his relationship with God, but the shifting of the focus from external to internal, the utilisation of immediate, temporal reality in order to illustrate a greater, spiritual reality, conforms with the underlying methodology of *Of Education*, where Milton admits that "because our understanding cannot in this body find it selfe but on sensible things, nor arrive so cleerly to the knowledge of God and things invisible, as by orderly conning over the visible and inferior creature, the same method is necessarily to be follow'd in all discreet teaching" (*Works* II 367-69).<sup>3</sup> The futuristic visions and

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<sup>2</sup> Amorose reaches a similar, if tentative, conclusion: "It is as though Michael is sent to Adam in order to expurgate error so that a rebuilding of vision can occur" (149). MacCallum is more emphatic: "The organization created by historical periods, types, and promises is only the foundation for the unity he achieves by making the whole history serve the education of Adam" ("History" 159). See also Summers: "The final books complete the education of Adam and of the reader. The simple acquisition of information, the learning of what was to happen (or had happened) in history, while essential, did not of itself constitute that education; it provided the occasion for it and the raw materials" (190).

<sup>3</sup> Coiro traces the parallels between *Of Education* and *Paradise Lost* in fascinating detail, noting the progression from agriculture to geography, anatomy and medicine, the practical arts, the reflection on morality, politics, and finally "the highest matters of theology and church history ancient and modern." Despite citing the above passage from *Of Education*, however, she seems to fail to take into consideration the progression from external to internal reality that is the implied focus of all teaching and to discover this

narratives of *Paradise Lost* offer a means of “orderly conning over the visible and inferior” so that, beginning with external realities, Adam may be directed towards “things invisible” and knowledge of God.

Before the Fall, knowledge of self and of God were inextricably interrelated. Adam was aware in the moments after his creation that it was through God that “I move and live / And feel that I am happier than I know” (VIII 281-82). Knowledge before the Fall was not simply an intellectual acquisition but an understanding of the relationship between God and man. Similarly, Adam’s postlapsarian education is designed not merely to impart information concerning the future but is a process of regeneration begun by “prevenient grace,” which, without Adam’s conscious knowledge, “remov’d / The stony from their hearts, and made new flesh / Regenerate grow instead” (XI 3-5). Prompted to address the ways in which he failed in knowledge in the Fall, he is enabled to arrive at a new understanding of the relationship between the human and the divine, moving from an acknowledgement of sin and a recognition of the justice of the penalty imposed, through repentance, to new hope. The process is one of redefinition, of a shifting focus, of internalisation. For Adam, as much as for any believer, “the new life brings with it...an understanding of spiritual affairs....Spiritual death led to a weakening and virtual extinction of these things. But in the new spiritual life the intellect is to a very large extent restored to its former state of enlightenment and the will is restored, in Christ, to its former freedom” (*Works* VI 478).<sup>4</sup>

Despite the removal of the immediate threat of physical annihilation, death remains central to the process of re-education. For Adam “regaining to know God aright” begins

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same movement in Adam’s education in *Paradise Lost*. Noting that the lesson Adam must learn “is not an ‘easy’ lesson: expulsion from paradise, limited knowledge, limited ambition, the inevitable linking of birth with death” (136), she remains focused on externals and does not identify the greater lessons that make Adam’s education not “brutal and pessimistic” (137) but a cause for “joy and wonder,” namely the internalisation of Paradise, so that, expelled from Eden, he will “possess / A Paradise within [him], happier far” (XII 586-87).

<sup>4</sup> Milton emphasises this movement towards internal, spiritual understanding, continuing: “UNDERSTANDING...IS A HABIT INSTILLED BY GOD, BY WHICH THE FAITHFUL WHO ARE INGRAFTED INTO CHRIST, WHEN THE DARKNESS OF THEIR NATIVE IGNORANCE HAS BEEN DISPERSED, AND THEIR INTELLECT ENLIGHTENED IN ORDER TO PERCEIVE CELESTIAL THINGS, COME TO KNOW, WITH GOD AS THEIR INSTRUCTOR, EVERYTHING NECESSARY FOR ETERNAL SALVATION AND FOR A TRULY BLESSED LIFE” (*Works* VI 478)

with a revision of his understanding of death. The Fall involves a serious miscalculation of what death entails, for at that stage Adam believes that it is commensurate with severance from Eve. "How can I live without thee" (IX 908) he asks as he contemplates separation from his "other self." The question is simply rhetorical: he has already reached the conclusion that life is not possible without her. Now he formulates the question as justification for his decision to share her fall.<sup>5</sup> At this stage, unaware of the meaning and nature of death, lacking any experiential or even theoretical knowledge of death that would enable him properly to discriminate between the two, he confuses life and death and claims that "if Death / Consort with thee, Death is to mee as Life" (IX 953-54). Death with Eve is not Life, however, and had Adam retained a correct understanding of the interrelationship of self, image and God, he should have known this and should have addressed the question "how can I live without thee" instead to God. Now, after the Fall, experiencing the regenerating effects of the Son's mediation and God's "implanted Grace in Man" (XI 23), he begins to revise his understanding of what life and death entail, and to recall the importance of a right relationship with God. Once articulated simply in terms of life (God is the source "From whom I have that thus I move and live" VIII 281), that relationship is now also related to and expressed in terms of his newly-acquired understanding of death. As he begins to understand that death is severance from God, not Eve, he takes the first critical steps from an understanding of the physical significance of death to an understanding of its spiritual consequences.

In Book XI, after praying to God, Adam expresses a sense of comfort and alleviation of distress. He recounts the experience to Eve:

Methought I saw him placable and mild,  
 Bending his ear; persuasion in me grew  
 That I was heard with favour; peace return'd  
 Home to my breast, and to my memory  
 His promise, that thy Seed shall bruise our Foe;  
 Which then not minded in dismay, yet now  
 Assures me that the bitterness of death  
 Is past, and we shall live (XI 148-58).

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<sup>5</sup> Lewis notes, "We are not shown the formation of his decision as we are shown the formation of Eve's. Before he speaks to her, half way through his inward monologue (896-916) we find the decision

MacCallum claims that Adam shows a tendency to “slight death and to assume too easily that its bitterness is past” (*Sons* 194) but the sense of comfort Adam derives from renewed communion with God should not be dismissed as an underestimation on his part of the consequences of death. At the end of Book X, having reached the realisation that death is to be a gradual process, a “slow-pac’t evil, / A long day’s dying” (IX 963-64), he suggests that in response to prayer God will be moved to pity and teach them how to survive in an inclement world. His concern lies exclusively with physical survival: he looks to the hostile elements and expresses his fear of rain, ice, hail and snow, the winds, lightning and baneful stars, and the effect of these on their physical existence. His hope – and the focus of his prayer – is that they might “pass commodiously this life, sustain’d / By [God] with many comforts” (X 1083-4). Now, having prayed, he no longer expresses concern over the details of their physical survival. Instead his focus is the internal, spiritual comfort he has received. The externalised problems of Book X, the hostile elements in conflict and the impact of their hostility on “Our Limbs benum’d,” are replaced and resolved by internalised solutions. After prayer, he speaks of “persuasion,” “favour,” “peace,” and “memory,” not as these relate to protection from the winds and cold but as they relate to an inward state of mind. Prayer has effected not physical comforts but spiritual comforting.

Throughout Book XI Adam further develops his renewed understanding that man can only “live and move” in God, qualifying this with the additional realisation that dislocation from God constitutes true death. When Michael announces that they are to leave Eden, Eve feels the severance from “created things” and calls the loss of Paradise an “unexpected stroke, worse than that of Death” (XI 268). Adam, responding to the same news, grieves primarily not at the necessity of their “departure from this happy place” (XI 303) but because he fears that this will entail banishment from the presence of God:

This most afflicts me, that departing hence,  
As from his face I shall be hid, depriv’d  
His blessed count’nance (XI 315-17).

Having made the correlation between God’s “placable and mild” countenance and the assurance in his heart that “we shall live,” Adam is “heart-struck with chilling grip of sorrow” (264) at the prospect of losing the possibility of communion with God. It is the

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already made – ‘with thee certain my resolution is to Die’” (126).

agony and chill of immanent death he feels, death precipitated by severance from his Maker.

In issuing his instructions to Michael, God indicates that the purpose of the visions is to alleviate sorrow and instil peace in Adam and Eve: the angel is to “reveal / To Adam what shall come in future days” and “So send them forth, though sorrowing, yet in peace” (XI 113-14, 117).<sup>6</sup> This peace is to be derived from the visions themselves and in particular the revelation of the promise concerning the “Woman’s seed.” It is to this promise and to the intent of the visions that Michael refers in his response to Adam’s despair at the prospect of losing access to God’s “blessed count’nance.” He is sent, he assures Adam, to ensure that Adam is confirmed in the belief that

in Valley and in Plain

God is as here, and will be found alike

Present, and of his presence many a sign

Still following thee, still compassing thee round

With goodness and paternal Love, his Face

Express, and of his steps the track Divine (XI 349-54).

Expulsion from Eden does not imply expulsion from the presence of God: life, not only physically but also spiritually, can continue beyond the bounds of Paradise.

Despite the fact that Adam’s recollection of the promise during prayer yields spiritual comfort, as yet he grasps only its physical significance: in order for the promised Seed to be born, he realises, he and Eve must live, at least long enough to reproduce. The true significance of the promise and the victory of the Woman’s Seed over the Serpent is spiritual, but, although prayer begins the process of his reorientation towards internal reality, Adam has a long way to go before he can understand the spiritual implications of that victory. This understanding represents the culmination of the process of re-education, of reorientation towards spiritual reality, and is only attained in his final speech in Book XII where he acknowledges the Son as “my Redeemer ever blest” (573). In Book VIII, under tutelage to God, prompted and challenged by a Maker whose aim was to elicit an expression of “the spirit within thee,” he perfected his understanding of himself and the nature of the divine. There, apprehension of inner reality was “sudden,” as, enabled by

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<sup>6</sup> Coiro, who calls Adam’s education “brutal and pessimistic” (37), perhaps overlooks these lines and Adam’s mounting joy throughout Book XII as he begins to find the Paradise within.



conversation with God, he moved away from verbs of external perception to an understanding of the inner nature of things. "Regaining to know God aright," however, involves not "sudden apprehension" but a laborious process of response and correction as Michael leads him away from a focus on the immediate and physical to a focus on spiritual reality. In the context of the Fall, death is the solution provided by God, the "final remedy" that releases man from what would otherwise be an endless life of woe in his fallen state and allows him passage to a "second Life" (61-63). Thus Death becomes the "Gate of Life" (XII 571). This world is not the ultimate reality, and throughout Michael's visions and the continued narratives of Book XII, Adam is directed away from the mundane to an understanding of spiritual life, from "shadowy Types to Truth, from Flesh to Spirit" (XII 303).<sup>7</sup> Preparing Adam for the visions, Michael not only purges his "visual nerve" with Euphrasy and Rue but instils into his eyes three drops of water from the Well of Life, which pierce "ev'n to the inmost seat of mental sight" (XI 418), working inwardly to enable him to apprehend spiritual reality.

The educational programme Michael delivers is designed and closely directed by God, who instructs the angel to "reveal / To Adam what shall come in future days /As I shall thee enlighten" (XI 113-115).<sup>8</sup> In his fallen state, Adam no longer expresses a thirst for knowledge but seeks only practical help to survive the onslaught of the now inclement elements.<sup>9</sup> The fact that he must learn, as well as what he must learn, is decided by God.

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<sup>7</sup> "If the new spiritual life is to lead to a paradise within, the husk of the old world must be cast away" (MacCallum *Sons* 192).

<sup>8</sup> Even Allen, who criticises Michael for his "monotonous monologue" and for swamping Adam with a sea of words, concludes that "One must not be too hard on Michael, for he maintains faultless order, imparts an enormous store of information, and draws Adam toward obedience to God" (117).

<sup>9</sup> Lewalski finds exemplified in Books XI and XII the "three root sins" that were involved in the Fall: intemperance, vainglory, and ambition, which, in agreement with Augustine, she identifies with thirst for knowledge. She specifically associates this ambition with Adam, saying that his "ambitious seeking after knowledge is disciplined by the cessation of the visions, forcing him to rely with humility and faith upon the revelation of the angel" (28). Not only does this seem to suggest that Adam has witnessed the visions of the previous book with something less than humility and faith, but it fails to take into consideration the fact that he does not ambitiously seek after knowledge in either Book XI or Book XII but is receptive to the visions as directed by Michael and God. Nor was an ambitious seeking after knowledge evident in his behaviour during the Fall. Eve's soliloquy before the Tree of Knowledge centres upon knowledge as ambition, and the temptation it represents is clearly established in her repeated use of "know" (758, 765, 753), "knowledge" (752), "unknown" (756, 757) and "wise" (759, 778). In contrast, in his soliloquy and subsequent address to

Whereas Adam took a leading role in the conversation with Raphael, posing questions that elicited an angelic response, now the course of instruction is predetermined, both in scope and purpose:

Know I am sent  
 To show thee what shall come in future days  
 To thee and to thy Offspring; good with bad  
 Expect to hear, supernal Grace contending  
 With sinfulness of Men; thereby to learn  
 True patience, and to temper joy with fear  
 And pious sorrow (XI 356-62).

There is no longer leisure for “sudden mind” to arise in Adam “not to let th’occasion pass” (V 451-52), but rather he is directed to participate in this educational experience with the simple imperative “ascend / This Hill” (XI 367-68).<sup>10</sup> Similarly, while he is allowed to respond to the visions, voicing his queries and fears, Michael – and through Michael, God – retains control of the direction of his education and each new vision is introduced by an angelic imperative to see: “Adam, now ope thine eyes” (XI 423); “now prepare thee for another sight” (555); “now prepare thee for another scene” (637); “now direct thine eyes”

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Eve, Adam does not once mention knowledge nor employ the related words, “know” and “wise.” This absence of words explicitly related to knowledge can only reflect the absence of an ambitious seeking after knowledge that informs his decision to fall.

<sup>10</sup> Schwartz notes that the Hill of Visions is compared, not to Mount Sinai, as one might expect, nor to the Mount of the Sermon on the Mount, nor the Mount of Transfiguration, but rather to that Mount on which Christ was tempted by Satan. Thus the allusion establishes the visions and narratives as a temptation of Adam, who is tempted “to view the prospect of what lay before him and want to possess it, as the Second Adam is offered the kingdoms of the world” (133). But given that Milton specifically identifies this Hill as “Not higher...nor wider looking round, /Whereon *for different cause* the Tempter set / our second Adam in the Wilderness” (XI 381-83 my italics), it is dangerous to read too great a parallelism into the allusion. If Satan’s purpose is “different,” we must not apply the same purpose to the visions of Book XI. An alternate reading, and one that I think avoids the trap of associating too closely the purpose of these visions with Satan’s purpose in the temptation of Christ, is to discover a similarity of *result* between the two. The temptation in the wilderness centres upon identity and self-knowledge. Satan introduces the first two temptations with the words “If thou be the Son of God,” challenging not only Jesus’ identity but that self-knowledge that is the product of a correct understanding of the self in relation to God. The visions Michael shows to Adam are designed similarly to challenge his self-knowledge, restoring him to a right relationship with God.

(711); “And now what further shall ensue, behold” (839). The only exception to this construction is the second vision which Michael introduces with the words “a monstrous crew / Before thee shall appear; that thou may’st know / What misery th’inabstinence of Eve / Shall bring on men” (474-77). Given latitude in conversation with Raphael to direct the discussion within the bounds of knowledge “not surpassing human measure” (VII 640), Adam is now obliged to follow without deviation the programme arranged for him by God, in which the main focus is his reorientation from external “seeming” to internal truth in order that he may once again understand the relationship between himself and God.

Initially Adam’s awareness of spiritual reality is subordinate to his concern with physical, temporal reality. After the first of the visions, it is not the sight of sin (the murder of Abel) that wakens his utter horror but the sight of physical death. Michael’s revelation that Abel will receive the rewards of faith “though here thou see him die, / Rolling in dust and gore” (459-60) should assure Adam that death does not spell the end of human existence, but for now he is unable to process this information. Ignoring the possibility of life after death and dismissing sin with a brief “Alas, both for the deed and for the cause!” (461), he focuses entirely upon the demise of the physical body:

But have I now seen death? Is this the way  
I must return to native dust? O sight  
Of terror, foul and ugly to behold,  
Horrid to think, how horrible to feel! (462-65)

The sight of further “shapes of death” in the second vision, accompanied by agony and “diseases dire” convinces him that the fallen life is utterly miserable and man would “Better end here unborn” (502). When informed by Raphael that such ends can be avoided by observing the rules of temperance, his focus shifts from obsession with the fact of physical death to the continuance of physical life and he asks how he “may be quit / Fairest and easiest of this cumbrous charge” (XI 548-49). Michael’s reply is again an attempt to prompt Adam to look beyond the simply existential to the spiritual: “Nor love thy Life, nor hate; but what thou liv’st / Live well” (553-54). For man to desire or pursue either death or simple duration of life as the ultimate good involves a distortion of his nature (Summers 201) and a misunderstanding of the purpose of existence.

The third vision reinforces this need to focus beyond the temporal, beyond the “fairest and easiest” path through physical life. The vision of tents and herds of cattle,

music and metal working, love and delight, seems to confirm Adam's hope at the end of Book X that God would help them "to pass commodiously this life." But as prayer offered spiritual rather than physical comfort, so now Adam must realise that the "Arts that polish Life" and allow one to live "fairest and easiest" are not to be desired as an end in themselves. Living "well" must take precedence and in fact, it is a life "Tri'd in sharp tribulation" that refines man and prepares him for the second Life.

In the fourth vision Adam begins to realise this. Enoch, the "Just Man" is saved from physical death and transported to heaven. In his response to this vision, Adam discriminates between external and internal heroism, physical and spiritual might. No longer concerned with living life commodiously, he is able to recognise the disparity between "Death's Ministers" and "that Just Man," between "sin" and "Righteousness." His condemnation of those who "multiply / Ten-thousand-fold the sin of him who slew / His Brother" (677-79) illustrates what MacCallum calls the "dialectic development" discernable in the process of his recovery of knowledge. In *Tetrachordon* Milton notes that in his teaching Christ did not "omitt to sow within them the seeds of a sufficient determining agen the time that his promis'd spirit should bring all things to their memory" (*Works* IV 188). Similarly, seeds sown by Michael (the identification of Cain as "unjust" and Abel's murder as a "bloody Fact") or by God (the promise concerning the woman's seed), while apparently overlooked by Adam at the time, are brought to mind by later events (further visions or, in the case of the promise, prayer). Although in his response to the first vision Adam seemed obsessed with the fact of physical death and dismissive of sin, now, in hindsight, he is able properly to identify Cain's act as one of sin and its repercussions in later history as sin multiplied.<sup>11</sup>

It is a critical commonplace that Abel, Enoch and Noah are types of Christ and that the visions are "resonant with typological implications" (MacCallum *Sons* 193, 196).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> MacCallum, citing Christ's method of teaching as identified by Milton, notes that Michael employs a similar strategy: "He leads Adam towards this goal by a series of graded steps, each one but the last inconclusive, and each consequently capable of misinterpretation....He employs ambiguity, sometimes appearing to mislead Adam deliberately in order to crystallize the false interpretations which must be rejected" (*Sons* 202).

<sup>12</sup> For a different approach, see Schwartz, who finds in Milton's use of typology an inversion: "Summary conclusions that continue, and so do not summarize or conclude; moments of enlightenment that turn out to be veiled after all: Milton has foiled all of the classic features of typology, and he has used

What is more interesting in terms of Adam's continued education and in particular the movement from physical to spiritual that is necessary to his proper appreciation of the fulfilment of the promise concerning the woman's seed, is the progression from Abel, murdered despite his "piety" and "devotion," to Enoch, the "Just Man" rescued by Heaven, to Noah, the "one Man found so perfect and so just, / That God vouchsafes to raise another World / From him" (876-78). This progression from death despite piety to continued life as a result of piety represents a development from a focus on the individual per se to the individual as mediator for the entire world. It is Adam, not Michael, who clearly articulates Noah's role as saviour of the world, a role that prefigures that of the Son who will "save / A World from utter loss" (III 307-8). Death, once dreaded as the demise of the individual, is now seen in global terms, a "whole World / Of wicked Sons destroy'd" (XI 874-75). Life, too, becomes a gift extended by God to an entire world for the sake of Noah. The ability Adam demonstrated in the previous vision to discriminate correctly between the "Just Man" and "Death's Ministers," between "sin" and "Righteousness" is evident again in the contrast he sets up between the "wicked Sons" and the "one Man found so perfect and so just." But his understanding is still incomplete: the world restored for the sake of Noah is still a temporal world and it is in response to the physical salvation of that world that Adam "erst so sad / Greatly rejoiced" (XI 868-69).<sup>13</sup> The continuation of physical life is seen as of ultimate significance: he has not yet fully comprehended the simple lesson of Abel's death and subsequent reward, that death is the gate to "second Life."

Regina Schwartz argues that Michael's use of typology, his frequent excursions into future time and the drawing back of the narrative to the present, "frustrate, rather than fulfill, our expectation of an end" (126). But Michael is merely following instructions to reveal "To Adam what shall come in future days" as God "enlightens" him and "intermix[ing] / My Cov'nant in the Woman's seed renew'd" (XI 114, 115-16). This

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typology to do it" (133). Amorose approaches Books XI and XII in terms of contemporary millenarian or apocalyptic histories.

<sup>13</sup> Looking for parallels to the stages of education outlined in *Of Education*, Coiro writes (specifically of Noah) that "It is finally here, at the end of Book XI, that Adam must face the stunning humiliation of seeing men who do not give in to temptation as he has done, men whom he must recognize as morally superior to himself" (140). If Adam is suffering from stunning humiliation he does a remarkably good job of concealing it beneath his outpouring of joy.

intermingling of the narrative revelation of the future with explanation of the prophecy concerning the promised seed must therefore be seen as an integral part of God's design and not Michael's "manipulation of typology" (Schwartz 126), and the reason behind it should be sought in the effects of Michael's teaching upon Adam's growth in knowledge. The interweaving of typological signification into the narratives sows in Adam's mind the "seeds of a sufficient determining," gradually reorienting him towards truths that are necessary to the "sum of wisdom." Michael's role throughout this process is to approve Adam's developing understanding and correct his continuing misapprehension that physical reality is what is important. Having pointed Adam towards Abel's reward by Faith and prompted him to focus on living "well" rather than "fairest and easiest," the angel corrects Adam's assessment of the second vision as "Much better," drawing his attention to the inadequacy of judging by external appearance:

Judge not what is best  
By pleasure, though to Nature seeming meet,  
Created, as thou art, to nobler end  
Holy and pure, conformity divine (XI 603-6).

Again, after the vision of the Flood Michael confirms Adam's hope that the rainbow signifies God's "Covenant never to destroy / the earth again by flood" (882-83), but qualifies this by shifting the conversation to bring it to the destruction of the earth by those fires that will "purge all things new, / Both heavens and earth, wherein the just shall dwell" (900-901). The World restored for the sake of Noah is not permanent, and Adam, having just expressed relief at seeing the world saved, must look beyond this life, this world, this existence to another. Having introduced the idea of the impermanence of the physical and the hope of a new world, Michael pauses "Betwixt the world destroy'd and world restor'd" (XII 3).<sup>14</sup> This summation of the position to which the archangel has brought their dialogue is rich with inference. Adam is able to appreciate the destruction of one world by the Flood and its restoration for the sake of Noah, but the allusion to the destruction of the temporal world and the creation of new Heavens and Earth still lies

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<sup>14</sup> Waddington believes that the litmus test of any analysis of Books XI and XII is how it explains the shift from vision to narrative and summarises various analyses in this light (9-10). His own thesis, that the ending of Book XI covertly describes Adam's own death, which must have happened shortly before the flood, and that the termination of the vision links "mortality and the limits of prophetic vision" is very convincing (16-20).

beyond his comprehension. Adam, too, is poised between a world destroyed and a world restored, between loss of external Eden and discovery of a “Paradise within thee” (XII 587).

Although Michael waits for Adam to respond, he remains silent. Again, the angel is content to sow the “seeds of a sufficient determining,” briefly summarising the critical lesson of the previous vision before continuing.

Thus thou hast seen one World begin and end;  
And Man as from a second stock proceed.  
Much thou hast yet to see, but I perceive  
Thy mortal sight to fail (XII 6-9).

Another world, too, is to end, and man is not only to descend by natural generation from Noah as a “second stock” but to be “transplanted” spiritually into the Son and be restored in him “as from a second root” (III 288). But for now the angel does not place unreasonable demands on Adam’s “mortal sight.” Rather, throughout the following narrative, he returns periodically to the theme of the dissolution of mundane reality and the inauguration of a reality that is spiritual, twice more arriving at the end of the world. On each occasion Adam’s response indicates his developing appreciation of the primacy of spiritual reality and the need to look beyond the boundaries of the physical. Finally his education is complete: acknowledging the Son as his Redeemer, he understands that death is the Gate of Life and that beyond “this transient World, the Race of time” lies an eternity “whose end no eye can reach” (XII 554, 556).

But at the beginning of Book XII Adam still has much to learn. In order to arrive at this “sum of wisdom” and discover the “Paradise within,” he must continue to adjust his focus from the material to the spiritual, learning to identify the spiritual truths woven through Michael’s narration of temporal events. As he corrected Adam’s response to the visions of Book XI, Michael continues to point to the spiritual application of the narratives. Adam’s displeasure at Nimrod’s usurpation of authority is approved by the angel: “Justly thou abhorr’st / That Son, who to the quiet state of men / Such trouble brought” (XII 79-81). But while approving Adam’s dismay at Nimrod’s attempt to subject “Rational Liberty,” Michael also prompts him to consider man’s loss of “true Liberty” in the Fall and the truth shadowed forth by temporal reality:

Sometimes Nations will decline so low  
From virtue, which is reason, that no wrong,

But Justice, and some fatal curse annex  
 Deprives them of their outward liberty  
 Their inward lost (XII 97-101).

The wandering of the Israelites and their eventual arrival in the "Land / Promis'd to Abraham and his Seed" (259-260) ameliorate Adam's concerns about the survival of mankind, easing his heart "Erewhile perplext with thoughts what would become / Of mee and all Mankind (273-76). Although he feels his "eyes true op'ning" (274), his focus is still the physical continuance of the human race and he needs Michael's prompting to look to realities beyond this. The history of the nation of Israel, and indeed Israel itself, is designed to draw his attention to truths that lie beyond the scope of temporal reality. Abraham's seed as the chosen race is to be superseded by a spiritual race, the "Sons / Of Abraham's Faith wherever through the world" (448-49). The Law, by bringing sin to light and man's inability to make expiation, makes it clear that "some blood more precious must be paid for Man" (293). Joshua's role prefigures the role of the Redeemer, who will "bring back / Through the world's wilderness long-wander'd man / Safe to eternal Paradise of rest" (312-14). The Israelites' wandering in the wilderness thus becomes an allegorical picture of the transitory and troubled passage of the believer through this world "suffering for Truth's sake," the "few / His faithful, left among th'unfaithful herd" (480-81).

In this sense, the entire thrust of the visions and narratives parallels the function of the Law among the Israelites, resigning Adam "in full time / Up to a better Cov'nant, disciplin'd / From shadowy Types to Truth, from Flesh to Spirit" (XI 301-3), continuing the theme of mirroring that is found throughout *Paradise Lost*. Rather than representing partial vision, with the movement from shadowy type to truth implying the arrival "at a definitive understanding, a complete vision instead of a partial one" (Schwartz 124), Milton's "shadowy Types," like Plato's, are the images projected by a spiritual truth upon the fabric of material existence. The existence of a shadow implies the existence of an object casting the shadow, and the movement from shadowy types to truth need not necessarily imply progression from an unclear to a definitive understanding, but rather is suggestive of a turning away from an unreal to a real object of vision. The focus of observation shifts as the observer is "disciplin'd"

From shadowy Types to Truth, from Flesh to Spirit,  
 From imposition of strict Laws, to free  
 Acceptance of large Grace, from servile fear



To filial, works of Law to works of Faith (303-6)

Although this progression in itself suggests an increased understanding to the extent that the viewer is enabled to identify and appreciate the difference between Types and Truth, Flesh and Spirit, the passage promises no “definitive understanding,” only the reorientation from external to internal, the substitution of material objects by spiritual. Perfection lies not in the eye (or understanding) of the beholder but in the object he beholds, and the movement from shadowy type to truth is a turning about, a reorientation of one’s focus from the shadow to the source that casts the shadow.<sup>15</sup> In their morning prayer Adam and Eve were able to identify God “dimly seen” in the created world. Now Michael’s visions and narratives turn Adam back towards truths of which the material is only a shadow, constantly drawing him towards the spiritual paradigm and, as Adam begins to assimilate this orientation towards spiritual reality, he begins to discover the “Paradise within.”

Essential to this process of regaining a proper knowledge of God is the intercessory role of the Son. The effects of his mediation on behalf of fallen man are evident already in Book XI, where Adam’s “short sigh of human breath, up-borne / Ev’n to the Seat of God” (XI 147-8) does indeed win God’s audience but only through the intercession of the Son, who, as Priest, brings Adam’s prayers before God and “interprets” them on his behalf. At this stage Adam is unaware of the Son’s intercessory role, but in order to attain the “sum of wisdom,” acknowledging his “Redeemer ever blest,” he must be brought to a conscious understanding of that role. The entire movement of Adam’s education from a focus on external reality to a focus on internal reality, from physical to spiritual, prepares him to understand Michael’s explanation of the promised Seed. Again, Michael does not overtax Adam’s developing understanding, but introduces the promise and its fulfilment by stages, initially mentioning “thy great deliverer” almost parenthetically:

By that Seed  
Is meant thy great deliverer, who shall bruise  
The Serpent’s head; whereof to thee anon  
Plainlier shall be reveal’d (XII 148-51).

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<sup>15</sup> Lewalski discusses the focus upon sight as metaphor for the assimilation of knowledge throughout Books XI and XII.

That the “great Messiah” is to mediate between God and man as Moses mediates between God and the Israelites becomes clear a little later during the same narrative passage (239-44). But until Adam demonstrates his realisation that the Law gives proof of sin while being unable to remove it, the angel does not proceed to narrate the birth of the Messiah. That it is the Messiah who, with his “blood more precious,” will provide expiation for those sins that the blood of bulls and goats could not remove is only hinted at; at this stage Michael makes no direct correlation between the Messiah and the necessary sacrifice. Instead, he allows Adam to mistake the fulfilment of the prophecy as purely physical: “Needs must the Serpent now his capital bruise / Expect with mortal pain: say where and when / Their fight, what stroke shall bruise the Victor’s heel.” Adam still seeks a literal interpretation of the promise, although the shifting focus from physical to spiritual reality and Michael’s frequent corrections should have alerted him to the possibility that the kingdom to be established is not of this world (MacCallum 198).

At this point his realisation that in person of the Messiah “God with man unites” extends only to the physical unity of divine and mortal: “from my Loins / Thou shalt proceed, and from thy Womb the Son / of God most High; So God with man unites” (380-82). Despite the huge strides he has taken in regaining to know God aright, he still does not “clear...understand” (376), but clarity of understanding is not far away. He has experienced for himself the dislocation from God that is the result of sin and the narratives of the first part of Book XII draw to his attention the fact that sin must always divide man from God.<sup>16</sup> After the Flood, God “oft descends to visit men / Unseen” (48-49) but as the world begins to “tend from bad to worse,” he withdraws, “wearied of their iniquities” (106, 107). Delighting in the Israelites who are “obedient to his will” he dwells among them in the tabernacle (245-248) until their “foul Idolatries, and other faults” cause him to withdraw once more (337-39). What Adam must now understand is that in the Son God not only unites with man in a physical sense, but the Son’s self-sacrifice, fulfilling the Law and releasing man from the consequences of sin, enables God, as Spirit, to dwell in man as in “living Temples” in a perfected realisation of the unity prefigured by his inhabiting the tabernacle. In keeping with the reorientation of Adam’s understanding from the physical to the spiritual reality throughout the visions and narratives, Michael corrects Adam’s

expectations of a physical victory. The bruising of the Serpent's head is not to involve "mortal pain," and Adam is not to conceive of the fight between the Woman's Seed and the Serpent as a duel resulting in physical wounds. The Son's victory is spiritual: "to the Cross he nails thy Enemies, / The Law that is against thee, and the sins / Of all mankind" (415-17).

Three times during the last two books of *Paradise Lost* Michael's narrative arrives at the end of the world, giving a tripartite structure to Adam's instruction that corresponds not only to the three drops of the Water of Life instilled into Adam's eyes, but also to a progression from salvation by Types, the Law, and finally by Faith. Abel, Enoch and Noah are presented as Types of the Redeemer and the visions of Book XI conclude with a typological representation of the final dissolution of the world in the destruction of the world by the Flood. It has already been noted that the first time Michael mentions the end of the world, Adam is unable to respond. The Mosaic Law, rather than offering salvation, confirms man's sinfulness and his inability to atone for his own sin. The Son's sacrifice offers complete expiation, fulfilling and dismissing the Law, and when Michael draws the narrative a second time to the end of the world and the Second Coming, "When this world's dissolution shall be ripe" (XII 459), Adam having seen the Messiah's sacrifice and the redemption of mankind from the strictures of the Law, does not lament for a world lost but responds with joy and wonder at the triumph of good over evil (XII 470-71) and grace over wrath (478). But Michael continues; Adam's instruction is not yet complete. For this he requires the work of the Spirit and the Law of Faith (XII 488-90). In this third, brief section of the narrative, Michael emphasises the importance of inward Faith as opposed to outward Rites and the satisfaction of formal religion. Adam must be directed one last time away from the external to the internal. His question "who then shall guide / His people, who defend?" (482-83) recalls God's guidance of the Israelites in the Pillar of Fire and the Pillar of Cloud, but now he must look for spiritual rather than physical guidance, inward rather than outward aid (MacCallum *Sons* 199). The believer's guide is internal and his armour is spiritual:

Hee to his own a Comforter will send,  
The promise of the Father, who shall dwell

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<sup>16</sup> As it if were some technical glitch in an otherwise commendable effort on Michael's part, Allen remarks that the archangel is "forever reminding Adam of his sin" (117). That Adam should be repeatedly

His Spirit within them, and the Law of Faith  
 Working through love, upon their hearts shall write,  
 To guide them in all truth, and also arm  
 With spiritual Armour, able to resist  
 Satan's assaults (XII 486-92).

Adam's hope to "pass commodiously this life," his initial horror at the sight of death, and his concern for the physical continuance of mankind that saw him collapse with grief at the sight of the Flood and the "end of all [his] Offspring" (XI 75), are superseded by an understanding that "suffering for Truth's sake / Is fortitude to highest victory, / And to the faithful Death and Gate of Life" (569-71). This "transient World" has been measured and Adam understands at last its dimensions and the spiritual reality that exceeds it, "Eternity, whose end no eye can reach" (556). Salvation or "ingrafting in Christ" "brings a comprehension of spiritual things, and a love of holiness, for the understanding is restored in large part to its original clearness and the will to its original liberty" (MacCallum *Sons* 200). Adam's opening words in Book IV revealed his awareness of God's power and goodness and his dependence on that power and goodness, as well as his responsibility to observe the prohibition against the Tree of Knowledge. For unfallen Adam, obedience seems an "easy charge"(421). But in the event, his responsibility to God is neglected. Desiring to maintain that "link of Nature" that binds him to his other self, he inverts the relationship between himself and Eve and places responsibility to her above responsibility to God. Now his final words in *Paradise Lost* demonstrate that he has regained a right knowledge of God. He reformulates his awareness of God's goodness, his dependence on that goodness, and his responsibility:

Henceforth I learn, that to obey is best,  
 And love with fear the only God, to walk  
 As in his presence, ever to observe  
 His providence, and on him sole depend (XII 561-64).

He re-evaluates life and death in the light of his newly acquired understanding, recognising that Death is not "some dreadful thing" but the "Gate of Life," a realisation he has arrived at through the example of the Son "whom I now / Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest" (573).

## Chapter 6

### Knowledge without God

Futuristic visions occupy two books of *Paradise Lost*, but in *The Tragedy of Man* the future is presented by Lucifer as a series of dream visions that occupy eleven of the fifteen scenes and take Adam in one night through some of the greatest epochs of human civilisation. The fact that events after the Fall comprise the greater part of *The Tragedy* means that Adam's postlapsarian pursuit of knowledge becomes the significant focus of the work. The knowledge he gains at a conscious level appears to relate largely to the construction of society and the inability of mankind to generate a social structure that can withstand the distorting effects of the Fall. But at a subconscious and symbolic level a similar movement towards internalisation can be found in *The Tragedy* as is evident in the final books of *Paradise Lost*. Adam ages physically during the course of the poem, a process that is traced in the stage directions as he is transformed from the youthful Pharaoh of Scene 4 to the decrepit old man who meets the Eskimo and his wife, but it is his gradual emotional and intellectual maturation to which Hubay refers when he writes, "Varázslat ez az álom. Egyetlen éjszaka férfit csinál a serdülőből" [This dream is magic. In a single night it makes a man of an adolescent] (1784). Lotze finds Adam's developing maturity less noticeable than the physical aging, although he, too, admits that "in rough outline we can witness in Adam the maturing process from impetuous youth to a thoughtful and introspective Kepler" (61). The process is more than a rough outline, however, and involves the internalisation and assimilation within the person of Adam of those interdependent yet often conflicting facets of human nature that are initially represented by other characters. Adam is not merely the protagonist of a dramatic poem, but by virtue of his role as the first man is representative of the human race in its entirety, as well as symbolising the individual. Thus his development gains a symbolic and universal significance, and his interaction with the other main characters has implications at this symbolic level. Sőtér suggests such a symbolic reading when he writes, "A Tragédia alapeszméjében eleve bennfoglaltatik a figyelmeztetés, hogy a Teremtés összhangjában Ádám ábrándos eszmeisége, Lucifer tagadása, valamint ez Éva képviselte természetiség egymásra szorúlnak, kiegészítik egymást" [From the outset the suggestion is evident in the basic theme of *The Tragedy* that in the Creator's harmony, Adam's

visionary idealism, Lucifer's negativity, and the natural sphere represented by Eve are dependent upon each other, complete each other] (180).<sup>1</sup> Lengyel, too, finds that Eve, representative of feeling or life energy, stands in antithesis to either Lucifer or Adam (188). The dialectic thus generated between idealism, negativity and the natural sphere finds synthesis in the final scene, where the Lord explicates the role of both Eve and Lucifer in Adam's development (Lengyel 161, Sötér 181).

The synthesis that Lengyel and Sötér find in the final scene is already occurring during the dream sequence, however, and a more precise division can be identified than that between idealism, negativity, and the natural sphere. Remembering that Lucifer characterises himself in the human sphere not as "negativity" per se but as the processes of the intellect (which he frequently deploys to negative effect), we can define the tripartite division of *értelem* [intellect], *érzelem* [sensibility], and *eszme* [the ideal]. As Adam is the representative of the individual in the poem, so it is in him that these three facets of the human nature – intellect, sensibility, and idealism – find synthesis.

Adam's tendency towards idealism is established in Scene 2. As was noted in Chapter 2, his response to Lucifer's reasoning stands in sharp contrast to Eve's emotional response. While she is easily induced to change her mind and see the Lord's prohibition as "cruel," Adam, recalling God's warnings about eating the forbidden fruit, is reluctant to discard the ideal of divine righteousness. Similarly, their responses after the Fall are antithetical: Eve, responding to the apparent and immediate, despairs, but Adam has already replaced the ideal he has rejected with the new ideal of self-as-god. His subsequent exposure to realities that had previously been beyond the limitations of his experience elicits not a logical, reasoned response, nor an emotional one but a response based solely on idealism.<sup>2</sup> He frets against the thread that ties his "proud spirit" to physical existence (388) and bewails the instability of matter that thwarts his "great designs and great desires" (435). He rejects Lucifer's reasoning as the backward-looking glance of old age and contrasts this with his own youthful idealism (540-41). In Scene 4, his reaction to

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<sup>1</sup> Mark also notes that during the historical scenes Adam loses his three-dimensionality and becomes an essentially allegorical figure ("Salvation or Tragedy" 299).

<sup>2</sup> Adam's response is to a degree emotional but the emotion he experiences is driven by idealism. His brief lament for the abandoned instinctive life of Eden hinges upon the sudden discovery that the ideal of self-as-god is not sustainable and provides a sharp contrast to Eve's distress, which is caused directly by observation of and response to their physical situation.

Lucifer's hypothesis that glory may be fleeting is again the response of the idealist: should he discover glory to be worthless, he would die and curse the world (597-98). His freeing of the Egyptian slaves is a grandiose and idealistic gesture that contrasts with Lucifer's cynical reasoning. But as the dream sequence progresses, Adam's responses lose their naivety. The protagonist of the later scenes is articulate, can discriminate between rhetoric and substance, and has developed his own opinions on the nature of the human condition. Similarly, the sensitive response initially represented by Eve is no longer foreign to his world-view. These developments do not occur at the expense of his idealism but rather support and foster his ongoing redefinition of what constitutes the ideal.

In Scene 2, the tension between intellect and idealism is strongly externalised, with Lucifer and Adam representing two conflicting modes of knowing. Adam feels trapped by Lucifer's logic and, although not necessarily compelled by it, is unable to respond in a way that effectively nullifies the impact of Lucifer's cynicism: "Mi végtelen körút okoskodásod, / Melyből menekvés nincsen is" (729-30) [Your argument runs in endless circles, / From which there is no escape]. He responds in frustration to Lucifer's mockery in Rome but his objections are unreasoned, and the hurling of a cup at Lucifer's head hardly constitutes a sound logical reply. Throughout these early scenes Adam relies on an external catalyst, whether that be situational or Lucifer's biting critique, to trigger his disillusionment with the ideal and stimulate the subsequent definition of a new goal. He is as yet incapable of bringing any critical faculty of his own to bear upon the ideal and at the end of the Constantinople scene requires Lucifer's critique of disillusionment to understand why the ideal has failed. The process towards assimilation or internalisation of Lucifer's critical faculty, however, becomes evident in the following scene. Adam's dissatisfaction with the indifference that characterises society in Prague, which he represents with a degree of eloquence in conversation with Eve, is not stimulated by Lucifer's cynicism, and it would seem that he has begun to adopt and utilise Lucifer's ability to dissect and analyse. In fact, at lines 2028-30 he echoes Lucifer's argument from the previous scene against the idealisation of women and explores it further, applying it to his current situation. This ability to rationalise, to identify flaws, continues to develop. In Scene 10, his scepticism about the possibility of knowledge echoes and expands upon Lucifer's mocking words from Scene 2, "nagyon sok van még, mit te nem tudsz / S nem is fogsz tudni" (225-26) [There is still so much you do not know / and never will]. In London he not only recognises Lucifer's sophistry and cynicism (2582, 2599) but argues against it

using the same techniques of ironic rebuttal as does Lucifer himself. His opening speech in Scene 12 demonstrates an impressive analytical ability; he does not require anyone's assistance in order to identify and condemn what is wrong in the methodology and goals of the Phalanstery. Not only has he developed new perception into what is important to human life but he has gained insight into Lucifer's character and intent, identifying in him "the cold indifference / of a spirit, who shares in neither my struggles / nor my death" (3781-83). Lucifer, he realises, wishes to drag every sacred ideal down to the dust (3837-39). Finally he claps his hand to Lucifer's mouth, stopping his tirade: "No more! Your every argument seems / So artless, so sound, / But so is all the more malign" (3875-77). This recognition in itself underlines Adam's assimilation of characteristics that properly belong to *értelem*, for it entails both conscious reflection and a process of logical thought that reveals the nature and interconnection of events – in this instance the nature and interconnection of Lucifer's arguments and motives.

A parallel internalisation of *érzelem* also occurs during the course of the dream sequence. In the chapter on Eve, the way in which she embodies *érzelem* was explored and how her mode of understanding is arrived at through experience of the world. For Eve, understanding is a sensitive response to a system of stimuli rather than the result of an abstracted logical process and hence represents a way of knowing very different to Lucifer's. For this reason the two are often in conflict. While *értelem* is aware of the gaps, *érzelem* is aware of the underlying unity of creation: "Minő csodás összhang ez, kedvesem, / E sokszerű szó és egy értelem" (205-6) [How splendid this harmony is, my dear; / These many tongues express a single sense]. Lucifer's natural antipathy to responsive sensitivity expresses itself in doubt, in ridicule, and in Scene 7 a parody of love. He sees *érzelem* as a defence against his destructive intellect: on seeing Adam and Eve in Eden, he doubts whether knowledge will be an effective weapon against those between whom *érzelem* "mint menhely áll, / Mely lankadástól óvja szívöket, / Emelve a bukót" (212-14) [stands as a refuge / That guards their hearts from fainting, / Lifting up the one that falls].

In Scene 4, through Eve, Adam begins to feel and understand his own emotions through Eve's mediation. Her presence allows him an awareness of the external, experiential world, not only by opening him to love but also by directing him to the world beyond the self. In Rome Eve expresses dissatisfaction with the shallowness of hedonistic pleasure and recalls a distant past "Where under sun-drenched palms / I was innocent,



playful, childlike, / And my soul's calling was great and noble" (1238-40), words repeated almost exactly by Adam twenty lines later (1259-62). This influence of her discourse on his is even more profound in the following scene, where his idealism and her sensibility come close to achieving harmonious unity. At the end of Scene 6 Adam embraces the ideal of Holy Love, finding chivalry to be the flower of the new world and the exalted ideal of womanhood to be its poetry. The perversion of the ideal in the debate between the heretics and the friars destroys the first tenet of his faith in that Love and he begins to avoid the word "Holy" as a marker of idealism. The resultant gap in his vocabulary is filled when he meets Eve; while he struggles with the awareness that the very ideal he had espoused prevents his love, his pursuit of the ideal is affected by her sensibility and he adopts a vocabulary that is biased towards emotion, using words he has not used in this scene until now: "hearts" (1755, 1803-4, 1860) and "dreams" (1664, 1695, 1830). Although Lucifer and Helen provide a satirical counterpoint to this fusing of idealism and emotion, first in dramatic parody and then in an intellectual analysis of the problems involved in the idealisation of love, and although it is the negative realisation of failure that wins out at the end of the scene, *érzelem* momentarily acts as a countering, stabilising force, confirming Adam's faith in the possibility, if not the realisation, of ideals.

Although sensibility and idealism in the persons of Isaura and Tancred are not permitted to unite, assimilation begins to occur within the character of Adam. In the following scene as Kepler his appeal to Barbara evinces an emotional sensibility that is characteristic of *érzelem* rather than idealism. He uses words that are expressive of sensitive response – "heart" (2027, 2035), "pain" (2003, 2028, 2036) and "love" (2025, 2026). That he is formulating such expressions without the explicit assistance of Eve's sensitive guidance suggests that he has begun to assimilate *érzelem* in the same way as he is assimilating Lucifer's rational and analytical abilities. In Paris, in the dream-within-a-dream, Adam's awareness of the necessity of human relationships is for the first time incommensurate with Eve's. In her first incarnation in Paris, Eve represents what is good in the society that Danton (and in Danton, Adam) wishes to destroy and the emotional response he experiences stands in striking contrast to her assumption of the idealistic role, a contrast she herself points out: "Más Isten vezet, / Mint akit én szivemben hordozok" ((2277-78) [The god that leads you / Is not the one I hold in my heart]). Her diffidence becomes more pronounced through the London scene and is translated into physical distance in the Phalanstery. Eve has fulfilled her dramatic function of prompting the

idealistic Adam towards sensitive awareness and now adopts a role in which she provides an emotionally-tuned Adam with a means of assessing the values of the age. In the Phalanstery and the Ice World, it is the sight of Eve that completes his disillusionment, and his emotional maturity is signalled in his ability to recognise in the “madness” of love a “lingering sunbeam from Eden” (3574).

This process of maturation, which occurs by means of Adam’s assimilation of those facets of the human nature initially represented by Eve and Lucifer, works at a subconscious level. He seems genuinely unaware of the huge progress he has made during the course of the dream-sequence, and this inability to recognise his own maturity contributes to his tragedy. The precise location of the tragic element in *The Tragedy* has proved a critical stumbling block. Lotze asks, “Is Adam truly a tragic character...if the poem’s exposition already assures Lucifer’s defeat and the salvation of man?” (56). The answer must be affirmative: Adam is a tragic figure and his tragedy lies precisely in his need for “salvation” as the imposition of a solution by an external, benevolent force. At the end of Scene 2, God dismisses Adam with the words, “lásd, mit érsz magadban” (335) [see what you can achieve on your own]. This imperative provides the motivation for the continuing structure of the dream-sequence: on his own Adam attempts to discover an ideal that can replace the ideal of divine righteousness that he abandons in the Fall. As Madách explained to Erdély,

Egész művem alapeszméje az akar lenni, hogy amint az ember Istentől elszakad, s önerejére támaszkodva cselekedni kezd: az emberiség legnagyobb s legszentebb eszméin végig egymás után cselekszi ezt. Igaz, hogy mindenütt megbukik, s megbuktatója mindenütt egy gyöngye, mi az emberi természet legbensőbb lényében rejlik...(*Válogatott művei* 393-394).  
[The fundamental idea of my whole work is intended to be this: when man breaks away from God and begins to act relying on his own strength, he pursues this course of action successively through mankind’s greatest and most sacred ideals. True, he fails everywhere, and the cause of his ubiquitous failure is a weakness that is hidden in the innermost fabric of human nature...]

The postlapsarian action of *The Tragedy*, comprising the eleven scenes of the dream sequence in which Adam explores the possibilities of self-knowledge outside any relationship with God, is often analysed from the point of view of a dialectic that

emphasises the externalised, objectified ideal. Lotze finds that Hegel's four steps in the development of world civilisations from despotism (the Orient) to democracy (Greece), aristocracy (Rome), and monarchy (the Christian world) are closely followed in the first four scenes of Madách's dream sequence, and locates a dialectic in these scenes, with the original thesis (All for One) established in Egypt and the first antithesis (One for All) in Greece. This antithesis is modified in the following scene to become Everybody for Himself, while the synthesis (Everybody for Everybody) is finally reached in Christianity (84). He points to further correspondence in the parallelism between Hegel's three stages of Christianity and the scenes set respectively in Constantinople, Prague and Paris (79). The dialectic identified by Lengyel, however, addresses more satisfactorily the issue of Adam's struggle to formulate an ideal and understand the basic problems of existence. Lengyel holds that as an underlying structural device in *The Tragedy* the Hegelian dialectic cannot be applied beyond the end of Scene 6. He cites St Peter's words, "Az egyén szabad / Érvényre hozni mind, mi benne van" (1371-72) [the individual is free / To bring to realisation all that is within him], as evidence of a bifurcation in the *eszme* and finds that the true development of the ideal from this point on occurs within the individual (156-57). The ideal as a goal of society is stunted and leads ultimately to the Phalanstery and Ice World scenes where the socio-political *eszme* is to scrape a living at whatever cost. For Lengyel, the dialectic is an ongoing revision of the ideal. Söter also identifies a dialectic; for him, dialectic tension is generated by the interaction of Adam's visionary idealism, Lucifer's negativity, and the natural sphere represented by Eve, while the synthesis is provided in the harmony imposed by the Lord in the final scene (180).

What Lengyel and Söter both identify is the centrality to any reading of *The Tragedy* of an internally conceived ideal and the ongoing revision of that ideal throughout the dream sequence. In this sense, there is an element of common ground between the dialectic structures they propose and that discerned by Amorose in Adam's education in the final books of *Paradise Lost*. Amorose finds there a dialectic in which history is presented in a broadly tripartite structure that establishes the thesis-antithesis conflict between the internal rule of conscience and the external rule of law, with the synthesis being reached in the third age in which "outward Law and inward conscience are combined, in effect internalising the Law so that the individual soul becomes the most reliable source for knowledge of God's directives" (148). The focus upon the internalisation of the solution or synthesis, and the transcendence of the individual over

the socio-political demesne, are themes that are central to Adam's postlapsarian learning in *The Tragedy of Man*.

Falling, Adam voluntarily leaves Eden and, having abandoned God, he begins to discover himself. As has been noted, this self-discovery initially takes the form of a self-awareness grounded in physical reality, in the ability of the self to project itself and its desires upon the external world. Adam's patterns of speech change as he explores the possibilities of the first person possessive suffix and first person verbal forms, and his dominance over the physical world provides his chief source of satisfaction: Önmagam levék / Enistenemmé, és amit kivívok, / Méltán enyém. Erőm ez, s büszkeségem (362-64) [I am become / my very own god, and what I conquer / is worthily mine. This is my strength and my pride]. His sense of godhood is shattered by the glimpse Lucifer gives him into the workings of nature. The instability of all matter, including his own physical self, undermines his claims to godhood and acts as a catalyst to his thirst for knowledge of what lies beyond the limits of his individual existence. It is in this scene, too, that Adam first identifies what is to become critical to the ongoing revision of the ideal:

I feel it, although I do not know its name,  
A single thread perhaps – the greater shame –  
That bridles my proud soul.  
Look – if I leap up my body falls back down,  
My eyes and ears refuse to serve  
When I spy out the secrets of the far-away;  
And if imagination lifts me to the heights,  
Hunger compels me, humbled, to descend  
Again to trampled matter (386-94).

This conflict between matter and spirit, external and internal, the inherent paradox of human existence as the "small spark kneaded into mud" underlies Adam's developing understanding of what constitutes the *eszme*.

As in *Paradise Lost*, historicity is not in itself the focus of *The Tragedy*. Rather, history provides a framework for the pursuit of knowledge that cannot be achieved within the limits of the individual's existence. Milton's Adam, proscribed by mortality that must see him die before the Advent, cannot understand the spiritual significance of the promise concerning the woman's seed without the assistance of Michael's visions and narratives. Similarly, for Madách's Adam, the dream sequence allows him opportunity to explore

issues of self-knowledge that would not otherwise be possible.<sup>3</sup> For this reason, historical accuracy and anachronism are not of primary concern to Madách. Arany is correct when he asserts that the dream visions do not correspond to the facts of world history, for Madách's interest lies not in fact but in the symbolic progress of ideals.<sup>4</sup> The appearance of Luther, Michelangelo, Cassius and Plato in a far distant future society would seem extraordinary were one to approach *The Tragedy* with the preconception that its overriding intent is the systematic portrayal of the history of mankind. The significance of these figures lies in their symbolic possibility. Luther represents fervour for new knowledge, Cassius the noble heart, Plato the visionary, and Michelangelo the creative soul. The ideal of individual creativity that they represent is presented as antithetical to the sterility of a society that has adopted the possibility of *megélhetés* [survival] as its ideal and where man's natural creativity has been distorted, removed from the sphere of art and focused instead upon the recreation of matter. Luther, Cassius, Plato and Michelangelo become symbolic types in a scene where it is not historicity that is crucial but the "clash of great ideals" promised in the prologue. The same holds true of the entire dream sequence:

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<sup>3</sup> Hubay quotes Pannenberg (no reference given): "A történelem az az egyetemes keret, amelyben az emberi élet és gondolkodás kibontakozik. Ebben a keretben az ember állandóan megtapasztalja, hogy az egyetemes történelem értelme rejtve marad előtte. Egyetlen jelen eseményt se tudunk egyértelműen meghatározni, mert benne élünk, sodródunk az egyetemes folyamatban: csak a vég, a jövő tárhatja föl a teljes jelentést. A történelem egészét nem foghatjuk át, márpedig teljesen csak az egész érthető. Addig, amíg a történelem véget nem ért, az emberi lét és cselekvés csak reménykedve várja a jelentés beteljesedését. A történelem rejtélye csak a végső beteljesedésben tárul fel..." (1785) [History is that universal framework in which human life and thought unfold. In this framework man is constantly experiencing that the meaning of the universal plot remains hidden before him. We cannot unequivocally determine a single event in the present because we are living *in it*, we are being carried along in the universal stream: only the end, the future, can expose the full meaning. We cannot embrace the entirety of history, although it is only in its entirety that it is completely understandable. So long as history has not arrived at its conclusion, human existence and the human story only waits, hoping, for the fulfilment of meaning. History's secret is only uncovered in the final fulfilment.] History offers Adam a context for self-knowledge, and in seeing history to its bitter end he reaches an appreciation of the meaning of life he could not gain in any other way.

<sup>4</sup> Cited by Lotze: "Can we expect Lucifer to show Adam the future of mankind in other than pessimistic colours....it is said that the gloomy dream visions correspond to the facts of world history. This I deny" (55). In his summary of 19<sup>th</sup> century response to Madách's work (53-55), Lotze also mentions Ágost Greguss's opinion that the historical scenes show things not as they really are but as Lucifer wants Adam to see them. Thomas Mark summaries modern criticism in "'The Tragedy of Man': Salvation or Tragedy?"

Madách casts Adam as Miltiades, Tancred and Danton because of the symbolic currency these characters bring with them. The dream sequence thus becomes a kaleidoscopic progression of historical moments or possibilities in which we can clearly recognise an ideal and its distortion. Lucifer directs the visions only to the extent to which as critical intelligence his aim is to point out the failing of the ideal in its historical realisation: he is a structural tool who fulfils not only God's but Madách's intentions.<sup>5</sup> Thus he invariably leads Adam to a moment in history where the ideal espoused in the previous scene has already become an anachronism, in an attempt to demonstrate the failure of the ideal rather than allowing its potential for positive realisation.

Questions of historicity, however, play a part in understanding the structure of the dream sequence and, hence, the nature of the *eszme* [the ideal]. Söter identifies a personal, autobiographical quality in the two Prague scenes and sees the Parisian scene they flank as central to the play's ideology, arguing that the preceding scenes prepare the way for this scene, while the speculative scenes which follow serve as an epilogue: "Az egész művet tehát a személyes, életrajzi és korélmény köré felépített szerkezetnek tekinthetjük; *Az ember tragédiájának* magya [sic] az első prágai, a párizsi, a második prágai – és a londoni szín" [Thus we may consider the whole work as a construct built around the personal and autobiographical, and around the ideals of the age; the kernel of *The Tragedy of Man* is the first Prague scene, the Paris scene, the second Prague scene – and the London scene.] (182). Mark follows the same division, finding four historical scenes followed by a central triptych and then another set of four perhaps slightly less historical scenes. But this division inevitably leads to problems in Scene 13. Mark's thesis that the battle cry of the

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<sup>5</sup> Ultimately, God is the architect of Adam's developing self-knowledge. It is God who gives Lucifer a foothold in Eden, God who directs Adam to "see what you can achieve on your own" and instructs Lucifer to continue his work as cosmic "leaven." Adam's words to the scientist in the Phalanstery could well be taken as an analogy for the underlying direction of the dramatic action:

I'm well aware that the man  
Who carries sand or carves stone is essential:  
Without him the hall will never rise.  
But such a man gropes in the dark,  
And has no inkling what work it is he helps in.  
Only the architect sees the whole,  
And although he cannot carve a single stone  
It's he who, like a god, creates the work (3206-13).

French Revolution provides the structure for the following scenes (London, the Phalanstery, and the Ice World), while fundamentally sound, fails to take into account the function of the Space Scene, which is clearly an examination of neither liberty, equality nor fraternity, and in fact exists outside society, indeed, beyond the world itself. However, if we take into consideration the fact that historicity is not in itself the overriding motivation of the dream sequence, we can identify other factors in the central triptych that provide new insight into the redefinition of the *eszme* in these last four scenes.

In the first four scenes Adam represents the ideal as a historical character. Discovering that the ideal is corrupted in its social realisation, he formulates a new ideal that will provide a new basis for society. Scene 7 comes to a conclusion with Adam renouncing all socially-oriented ideals: “mozogjon a világ, amint akar / kerekeit többé nem ígazítom” (1866-67) [let the world move as it may, / I shall no longer set its wheels straight]. He determines to disengage himself from ideals and stand on the outskirts of society as an observer; during the first Prague scene this is what he does both literally and metaphorically.

When the first set of four scenes are compared with the last four one notices immediately that Adam no longer espouses the ideal in himself, he is no longer cast in the role of a historical figure and is no longer a central participant in the society around which the scene is based. More importantly – in fact, of fundamental importance – is that during the central triptych Adam’s concept of what constitutes the ideal has changed. In that first set of four scenes he was searching for the realisation of an ideal within a social setting – the realisation of an ideal by society. The ideals he espouses in these scenes are all socially oriented and his disillusionment is based in the socio-political failure of the ideal. In Egypt he comes to regret the “waste and woe of millions” and to formulate a new ideal of civic virtue. In Greece his disillusionment is again specifically focused upon the failure of the political ideal: “vagy miért is éljek / Midőn látom, mi dőre a szabadság, / Melyért egy éltén küszködém keresztül” (1257-59) [or why should I live / since I see how foolish is that liberty / for which I strove my entire life?]. It is this liberty that had comprised his “*nagy eszme*” [great ideal] (1071-72) and its failure, together with his disillusionment with the socially oriented ideal of civic virtue, leads him to formulate hedonism as the new expression of the ideal in the social context. The end of Scene 6 sees him adopt Holy Love, an ideal that has both socio-political and individual possibilities, bringing both brotherhood and the liberation of the individual (1363-65). Although the Apostle Peter,

like Milton's Michael "sowing seeds of a sufficient determining," emphasises the discovery of the ideal within the individual, Adam espouses rather the social goal of brotherhood, seeing in Holy Love, too, a means for the betterment of society:

Oh, if God exists,  
If he cares for us and has power over us,  
Let him bring forth a new people and a new ideal for the world,  
The former to infuse good blood into a bastard race,  
And the latter to give scope to nobler folk to reach  
New heights (1339-44).

At the end of Scene 7, having been brought to the point where he is obliged to admit that it is not possible to realise an ideal in society, Adam steps back from idealism altogether. He will no longer attempt to right the wheels of the world (1866-68). But his Parisian dream reawakens his enthusiasm for the *eszme* [the ideal] – not as the espousal of socially oriented impulses, although this definition continues to be explored throughout the following scenes, but for the first time as the expression of the *Isten szikrája*, the "spark of God" or "divine spark" in man: "How splendid was the scene revealed to me! / He's blind, who cannot see the spark of God, / Smeared though it was with blood and filth" (2372-74). This bifurcation of the ideal and its formulation as the individual expression of an internal state of being is pivotal: it marks a turning point in Adam's self-knowledge and introduces the dichotomy of matter and spirit that provides the impetus for the final scenes of the dream sequence: "Az eszmék erősbek / A rossz anyagnál. Ezt ledöntheti / Erőszak, az örökre élni fog" (2411-13) [Ideals are stronger / Than sorry matter. Might can destroy matter, the ideal will live forever]. Man is "a small spark kneaded into mud" and if we take Saint Peter's words, "the individual is free / To bring to realisation all that is within him," literally, that which is inside the individual is the *Isten szikrája*, the divine spark. As Lengyel writes, "Az *eszme* tehát mint örök feladat *Isten szava* bennünk: *az eszme a bennünk rejlő Isten*" [The *eszme* is the eternal task inside us; it is the *word of God*. *Eszme is the God within us*] (156).

Whereas in the first four scenes Adam hoped to prove the possibility of the social realisation of the ideal, in the four scenes following this pivotal internalisation of *eszme* the action centres around his assertion that the ideal is stronger than matter. The structural impetus of these scenes is the dichotomy between internalised *eszme* and material existence. In London materialism proves stronger than idealism: man degenerates to a



state of animal existence (“silányul állattá az ember” 2726) because the divine spark, the creative impulse, is made subservient to matter. Music, identified by Adam as a product of the creative ideal in Scene 10, is simply a way of scraping a living, and value is vested in objects rather than in beauty or truth. The distortion of the ideal is most clearly seen in Eve, in whom Adam hopes to find “holy poetry, the music of the past” (2798). She is possessed of a degree of innate piety that leads her to place her bouquet before the statue of the saint, and at the bizarre conclusion of the scene, when the citizens of London leap one by one into the open grave, she is transformed by the spirit of Love, Poetry and Youth, transcending matter and scorning the grave that only has power over “dust...the earthborn” (3135).<sup>6</sup> Yet even Eve can be bought by the prospect of material wealth and effectively names her price: “you might buy me a fairing...I saw some trinket vendors over there” (2991, 2999, cf 2815).

Even the internalised ideal can be corrupted by the exigencies of material existence and, in the following scene, Adam looks to science to provide a stable social order that will nurture and give free scope to individual expression, enabling the *Isten szikrája* to find more perfect fulfilment. He identifies *eszme* as that which “directs ardour, that sacred, eternal flame in human hearts...to loftier goals” (3166-71). But in the conflict between matter and ideal material existence proves stronger: megélhetés, the possibility of the simple continuance of physical life, is upheld as the *eszme* governing this society and anything that does not contribute to mere survival is forbidden (3369). Poetry is dismissed as a “useless flower” and Adam finds the utilitarian productions of the Phalanstery “devoid of art and soul” (3340). The focus upon material existence is reflected in the Scientist’s attempts to recreate life in a test-tube by manipulating the “eternal laws of matter” (3414), experiments that are doomed to failure because matter alone does not constitute life. The necessary spark (“szikra” – significantly, the same word Adam uses to describe the divine spark in man) is missing and cannot be fabricated by science. As we

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<sup>6</sup> Eve’s apotheosis is one of the most Faustian moments of *The Tragedy*. As Hubay remarks (1787), Madách might have chosen to finish the poem here but did not. The fact that he continued beyond this apotheosis and the ascendance of the eternal feminine is another argument to look beyond the Faustian influences in *The Tragedy*. Had Madách concluded here, the philosophy expressed in *The Tragedy* would be fundamentally different. Adam’s self-knowledge is not yet complete. He has not yet discovered the ultimate interdependence of spirit and matter, nor formulated his final definition of the goal of life, nor made the final choice to relate his own being to that of the divine.

have seen, Luther, Michelangelo, Cassius, and Plato represent the attempt of the individual to “bring to realisation all that is within him,” attempts that are repressed and punished by the fraternity. Again, matter proves stronger than the ideal, and at the end of the scene Adam rejects the physical and seeks an otherworldly existence, his lines echoing Eve’s apotheosis at the end of Scene 11: “Megvetjük e földnek hitvány porát, / Keresve útat a magasb körökbe” (3584-85) [Let us scorn the dust of this miserable earth, / Seeking the way to higher spheres].

In the Space Scene Adam’s hypothesis that ideals are stronger than sorry matter is put to the ultimate proof. Leaving the earth behind, he attempts to dislocate the internalised ideal from the material body. The antipathy of spirit and flesh first experienced in Scene 3 is reflected in his conflicting emotions:

Two emotions are warring in my breast:  
 I feel how miserable the earth is, how it binds  
 My lofty soul, and long to break free of its sphere;  
 And yet I weep for it and ache that I am torn away (3595-98)

Nevertheless, he is determined to continue until every bond that ties him to the earth is broken (3626-27), confident that the soul, that composite of “thought and truth” (3641), is eternal and therefore will outlive the demise of matter. Identifying this “thought and truth” as that which existed before the world of matter, he implicitly associates it with the divine, for it is God who enjoyed existence before the creation of the material world (117-18). Again, Adam is referring to the *Isten szikrája* in man, the divine that informs the physical being, but now the focus is not the creative energy of that divine spark but its immortality. His attempts to render it disincarnate fail. Ideals cannot outlive “sorry matter”; the two are inextricably bound together within the human nature. This realisation, bought at the cost of his near-death, leads him to accept the condition of mortality which is essential to the pursuit of any ideal. Ultimately, the ideal is inspiration, direction rather than goal, and is valued for the effect it has upon the individual:

However wretched  
 My ideal, still it inspired me,  
 Raised me up, and so proved great and holy (3715-16).

If the ideal has not proved stronger than matter and the two must coexist in the human condition, Adam can still hope that *eszme* will prove to be eternal. Returning with Lucifer to the earth, he anticipates the final triumph of idealism:

Lead me to where palm trees flourish,  
 The lovely home of sunshine, sweet scents,  
 Where man's soul has grown  
 To full consciousness of its strength (3745-47).

The Ice World that concludes the dream sequence is the grimmest of all the scenes, for here not only the hope that Adam expresses in these lines but also his assertion in Scene 10 that although might can destroy matter, the ideal will live forever, meets its reversal. He finds no new ideal sprung up again, to breathe life into the earth (3732-33) but rather, this final scene is infused with death. The moon stares from behind the fog like "death's lantern" and nature has flung a shroud over the world as over a grave. The world and mankind are dying, but the terrible truth is that the ideal, the *eszme* is already dead. Matter has outlived the ideal. Or, as Lucifer argues, the ideal has always been subservient to matter, shaped by the exigencies of material existence and blind coincidence.

Milton's Adam is conducted through the visions and narratives of Books XI and XII by the archangel Michael with the specific intent of assisting him to remedy those failures in knowledge that were precipitated by the Fall and to regain to "know God aright." Madách's Adam is guided by Lucifer, who in Scene 1 announced to God his intention to "subvert your world" (151). Bécsy suggests that Lucifer's goal is to drive Adam to suicide because this will prove that God's creation "is not good" (259). But Adam's physical demise is not Lucifer's aim. He saves Adam from death on more than one occasion and greets his potential suicide in Scene 15 not with congratulation but with cynicism.<sup>7</sup> In Scene 2 he gives his reasons for leaving Heaven and explains his ultimate motivation in a passage that contains startling parallels to St Peter's description of his new world:

I long for strife, for disharmony  
 Which gives birth to new strength and a new world,  
 Where the soul, by itself, can be great (300-303).

Given St Peter's emphasis on the freedom of the individual to "bring to realisation all that is within him" and the subsequent development of Adam's understanding of what *eszme* comprises, Lucifer's identification of the fulfilment of internalised potential as his goal

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<sup>7</sup> Lucifer rescues Adam from beheading at the end of Scene 5 and suggests that they enter the Phalanstery in disguise, thus avoiding the threat of violence (3182).

seems astonishing. It is as if Lucifer is pre-empting St Peter, directing Adam towards the critical spiritual facet of existence. In fact, his words serve to define, before the Fall, before the dream sequence, the arena of combat: his aim is not to destroy Adam physically but to effect a spiritual subversion, relying on strife and disharmony to bring to realisation in Adam a self other than that intended by God.<sup>8</sup> Renouncing providential control, God leaves Adam in Lucifer's world, where the self, by itself, can be great. The world of instinctual existence and stasis is replaced by Lucifer's world of self-awareness and an evolution driven by the realisation of absence. Lucifer invariably leads Adam to a moment in history where the ideal espoused in the previous scene is already an anachronism. His intention is to demonstrate the failure of the ideal and by doing so, to destroy Adam's instinctive idealism, destroy, as it were, the divine in man. His opposition to the *eszme* is based on cold fact – the cold fact of his own selection of history – and is argued with merciless mockery to bring Adam to disillusionment and despair:

In good time you'll reach the goal  
 Sooner perhaps than you might hope,  
 And then you'll weep, seeing its imbecility,  
 While I laugh in your face (813-16).

Despair is reached in the penultimate scene, when Adam is faced with choice whether to accept or defy the destiny allotted him by God (3937-38). This is Lucifer's moment of triumph, the moment at which Adam's idealism apparently lies vanquished. Having identified the *Isten szikrája* in man and its creative expression as one thread of the bifurcated ideal, having asserted the superiority of ideal over matter and the indestructibility of the ideal, Adam is faced not only with the utter failure of the divine spark to overcome the material world but also the interdependence of that spark on man's physical existence. Lucifer's triumph and Adam's tragedy is that, alone, he can – apparently – achieve nothing.

Abandoning Adam after the Fall, God bids him “see what you can achieve alone.” Again, the necessity of individual endeavour parallels the necessity of self-realisation in Lucifer's world – or St Peter's. Self-knowledge must be achieved by the individual. Maturity is achieved through internalisation: the internalisation of the ideal and the

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<sup>8</sup> In line with this argument is the fact that the Heavenly Chorus sees the world as “lost” at the moment of the Fall, that is, at the moment of Adam's spiritual crisis, not thirteen scenes later when he

internalisation of those facets of human nature that were originally identifiable only in Eve and Lucifer. But the redefinition of the ideal and Adam's identification of the internal self as the God-in-man, the *Isten szikrája*, also represents a significant development of his self-identification vis-à-vis God. The internalisation of the divine as the spark that animates human life leads to a recognition of an interrelationship between God and man that represents a fundamentally different position from the vaunted self-divinity of Scene 2. It is a reversal of man's desire to compete with God evident in Scene 4 where Adam as Pharaoh believes that in the pyramids he has achieved an endless glory that outdoes God's and boasts that "Man has become stronger than God" (587). This realisation that the divine is not divorced from the human despite God's and Adam's abandonment of each other after the Fall is critical in terms of the resolution of *The Tragedy*. Adam's discovery that striving itself is the meaning of life, "life is struggle, / and man's end is this struggle in itself" (3701-2), so often identified as the crux of Madách's philosophy, must be read in conjunction with the lines that contain his capitulation and return to God, "Uram, legyőztél. Ím, porban vagyok / Nélküled, ellened hiába vívok" (4002-3) [Lord, you have conquered; I lie in the dust / Without you, against you, I strive in vain]. His return to God underlines his failure to prove his own greatness and as such is inimical to the ideal of self-godhood, but it is only through his redefinition of the ideal, through his realisation that the self, the inner soul of man, is of divine origin, that he is ultimately able to relate that self to God. If thought and truth are infinite and existed before the world of matter (3641-42), then thought and truth are commensurate with the God Adam had attempted to deny.

This relation of the self to God entails both salvation and tragedy.<sup>9</sup> Although it marks the end of Adam's struggle on his own and brings a degree of tranquillity, his return

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considers suicide.

<sup>9</sup> Belehorsky asks: "Mi a Tragédia végső konklúziója? Az ember élet fennmaradásának biztos tudása, bizonyosság az emberi élet értelmességében.... Az individuum mindennél értékesebb kincset fedez föl önmagában: szabadságát. Szabadságát, mely azonos ember létevel, szabadságát, mely bűnhöz, erényhez egyformán kötheti. Küldetése az állandó választás, mely önformálás, önmegvalósítás is. A szabadság jelentése egyenlő az én-ével...." (892) [What is the final conclusion of *The Tragedy*? The certain knowledge of the survival of human life, certainty in the intelligence of human life....The individual discovers in himself treasure more valuable than everything: freedom. Freedom, which is identical with human existence, freedom, which may bind one equally to sin and virtue. Its destiny is eternal choice, which is also self-formulation, self-realisation. The meaning of freedom is equal to the meaning of the "I"]

to God does not provide him with access to knowledge beyond that which he has already acquired through his own efforts. The solution imposed by God is merely a recapitulation of what Adam has already learnt at a subconscious level and what has been demonstrated by the action of the drama – that within the limits of human experience uncertainty is the only certainty, and that meaningfulness in life can only be found in the active cooperation of responsive sensitivity, idealism, and the potentially destructive rationalism of the intellect. The synthesis outlined by God is only the synthesis already achieved within the character of Adam. Not even the immortality of the soul is confirmed by Madách's God; rather, he affirms the impossibility of accessing knowledge that lies beyond the ability of the individual: "Ne kerdd / Tovább a titkot, mit jótékonyan / Takart el istenkéz vágyó szemedtől" (4042-44) [Inquire no further / Into the secret that the hand of God / Has kindly veiled from your longing sight]. And yet the return to God is necessary. It is the delayed response to God's challenge in Scene 2. It marks the end of Adam's struggle on his own and offers the possibility of meaning within the context of a relationship with the divine.

## Conclusion

On an initial reading of *Paradise Lost* and *The Tragedy of Man* many differences are apparent. The overriding programme of Milton's poem is to "justify the ways of God to men," and his version of the Fall story explores the relationship between God and man and the necessity of that relationship to any true self-understanding. Madách, on the other hand, wished to demonstrate the effects of man's severance from God and his subsequent progression through a series of ideals while reliant on his own strength. Consequently, the details of the Fall story – conversation with God in Eden, the injunction against the Tree of Knowledge, the role of Satan or Lucifer, the consequences of the Fall, expulsion from the garden, and Adam's postlapsarian [re]discovery of knowledge – are deployed differently and to different ends by the two authors. And there is the overriding difference between epic and tragedy, between affirmation and despair. But such differences should not blind us to an underlying similarity of intent. Belohorszky's comment on the philosophical basis of *The Tragedy* might also be applied to *Paradise Lost*: both are works "melynek valóságtükrözése komplex válasz a lét kérdéseire és így immanensen filozófiai állásfoglalás is" [whose mirroring of reality is a complex reply to the questions of existence and thus...also a philosophical stance] (887).

At one level, philosophy has always attempted to catalogue and explicate not only our knowledge of the external world but also the phenomenon of human self-awareness. The desire to know comprises a critical goal of human endeavour; in the words of Aristotle, "all men by nature desire to know" (*Works* VIII 980a). This desire reaches towards answers to the question, *who (or what) am I?* The Biblical story of the Fall, while formulated as religious mythology rather than a systematic philosophical statement, approaches the same question. At its most fundamental level, it is an attempt to explain our awareness of conflicting potentialities within the self by rationalising our ability to conceive of an ideal of internalised perfection and our simultaneous inability to realise that ideal. In our fallen state, we lack perfection, and yet the impetus to perfection persists, implying a faculty of discrimination: we are able to recognise whatever it is we identify as "good" as well as its opposite, whether that opposition is simply a failure to arrive at the ideal or the active negation of good. This ability to discriminate, to "know good and evil," is identified by God in the Biblical account as what characterises the divine (Gen. 3.22) and yet, paradoxically, it also defines the human condition. The Fall marks the end of an

instinctual existence in a state of perfection and the beginning of the struggle for moral and spiritual equilibrium, that ability to err which makes imperfect fallen existence recognisably human.

For Classical philosophers and poets, knowledge of the gods was not necessarily an integral part of knowledge of one's self. The relationship between divine and mortal as described by the poet Pindar argues that god and man are similar, if ultimately incommensurate, beings:

Single is the race, single  
Of men and of gods;  
From a single mother we both draw breath,  
But a difference of power in everything  
Keeps us apart (*Greek Literature* 104).

For Pindar, man does not find his source in god. Xenophanes goes further, postulating that the idea of divinity may have its source in man: "Man made his gods, and furnished them / with his own body, voice and garments" (*Greek Literature* 90). For Aristotle, knowledge of the self leads to God rather than having its foundation in the divine. Observation of external reality develops self-knowledge; the soul best discovers itself in the mirror of the intimate friend (*Works* IX 1213a, 1245a). When Milton's Adam awakes, he responds immediately to details of the external, to "Hill, Dale, and shady Woods, and sunny Plains, / And liquid Lapse of murmuring Streams; by these, / Creatures that liv'd, and mov'd, and walk'd, or flew" (VIII 262-64). Observing the creatures, his attention is turned to himself and the fact that he, too, "sometimes went, and sometimes ran" (268). But for Adam the self reflected in the external is not enough to bring him to self-knowledge. Despite the fact that, like the creatures around him, he is possessed of "supple joints" and "lively vigour," this is not sufficient to answer his questions about the source of his existence. His discovery of his physical being, of those "supple joints" and "lively vigour," is qualified immediately by a significant "but":

Myself I then perus'd, and Limb by Limb  
Survey'd, and sometimes went, and sometimes ran  
With supple joints, as lively vigour led:  
But who I was, or where, or from what cause  
Knew not (VIII 267-71).



Milton's Adam seeks understanding of the source of his own being as an essential prerequisite to knowledge of himself. At this stage he lacks the intimate friend in whom, according to the Aristotelian paradigm, he might be able to discover himself. But his urgency to understand the source of being as evinced by his address to the created world reflects a development in the philosophical treatment of the question of self-knowledge in which Christian values assimilate and supersede the Aristotelian categorisation of the means to self-knowledge. The role of the intimate friend is assumed by a God who is the source of all being and with whose existence the existence of the individual is inextricably involved, and the Classical impetus towards self-knowledge is complicated by this relationship. In his *History of Britain* Milton refers to the development of self-knowledge through a study of external reality, claiming that a study of former times may "raise a knowledg of our selves both great and weighty ... for if it be a high point of wisdom in every private man, much more is it in a Nation, to know it selfe" (*Works* V i 130). Yet in *Paradise Lost* Raphael warns Adam against superfluous study of external reality. The pursuit of all learning is to be directed towards one goal. Knowledge exists "within bounds" and enquiry into the physical world should "serve / To glorify the Maker" (VII 120, 115-16). Thus observation of the external world provides a point of departure for knowledge of God, who "sitt'st above these Heavens / To us invisible or dimly seen / In these thy lowest works" (V 156-58). In these lines Milton reflects a conviction held widely by his contemporaries that "Since the perfection of blessedness consists in the knowledge of God, he has been pleased...to manifest his perfections in the whole structure of the universe, and daily place himself in our view, that we cannot open our eyes without being compelled to behold him" (Calvin *Institutes* I 51).<sup>1</sup>

It is Adam's observation of the created world and specifically of himself that leads him to the conclusion that there is a "Great Maker" through whom "I move and live" (VIII 281). Self-knowledge and knowledge of God are inextricable and the Aristotelian concept of discovery of the self through study of an intimate friend is superseded by discovery of

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<sup>1</sup> In this issue Milton is very close to Calvin. Compare *Christian Doctrine*: "That there is a God, many deny....But he has left so many signs of himself in the human mind, so many traces of his presence through the whole of nature, that no sane person can fail to realise that he exists" (*Works* VI 130) with Calvin: "For though in old times there were some, and in the present day not a few are found who deny the being of a God, yet, whether they will or not, they occasionally feel the truth which they are desirous not to know" (*Institutes* Vol 1 44).

the self through contemplation of the divine. To quote Calvin again, “Our wisdom...consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves. But as these are connected together by many ties, it is not easy to determine which of the two precedes, and gives birth to the other. For...no man can survey himself without forthwith turning his thoughts towards the God in whom he lives and moves” (*Institutes* I 37). Although Calvin maintains that “some idea of God always exists in every human mind” (*Institutes* I 44) and cites Cicero as evidence that this idea of God was also prevalent in the Classical world, the Renaissance theologian John Frith identifies the Bible as the authority for the interrelationship of knowledge of self and knowledge of God:

The philosophers to whom God had inspired certain sparkles of truth, acknowledged that the chiefest point of wisdom and direction of a man’s life was to know himself, which sentence the Scripture establisheth so clearly, that no man may dissent from the truth of the same. For Solomon saith, that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Now who can fear the Lord, but only he that knoweth himself, as the Scripture teacheth him?” (265).

Following this conviction that knowledge of self and God are intricately related, Milton’s Adam discovers himself in conversation with God. His first instinctive apprehension of the existence of a “Great Maker” is confirmed and through interaction with God he arrives at an expression of “the spirit within thee...My Image” that wins the approval of his Maker. For Milton’s Adam, the prelapsarian state offers opportunities to develop through conversation with God, conversation with Eve and conversation with Raphael, and the self-knowledge that he constructs is sufficient – or should be sufficient – to enable him to make correct choices when faced with temptation. But he fails to “know [him]self aright” and falls, confusing the relationship between source, self, and image. He loses his ability to perceive the dependence of the self upon its source, to understand himself as God’s image, and posits dependence upon his own image, Eve. For Milton, the Fall represents the “ruins” of knowledge, and all postlapsarian learning – including Adam’s in the final two books of *Paradise Lost* – is to be directed towards reparation of those ruins by regaining a proper knowledge of God and, consequently, a proper understanding of the self.

For Madách’s Adam, by contrast, discovery of the self is located not in the prelapsarian state within the context of a relationship with God but in the moment of the

Fall and through God's and man's abandoning of each other. Madách's revision of the Fall story largely rejects the assumption of Christianity that knowledge of self and God are interdependent and presents a self that is the centre of its own universe, a god unto itself, and is able to realise itself – and, indeed, only can begin to realise itself – in the absence of an external divinity. Adam's fall out of a relationship with God and into self-knowledge and the rejection of *The Tragedy of Man* of the necessity of a relationship with God to the acquisition of initial self-knowledge, offers an analogy to the contemporary philosophical shift away from a theocentric universe to one whose centre of gravity and cause of being is the individual. Adam's identification of struggle as the goal of life, his emphasis on action, his redefinition of the ideal through disillusionment and choice, in many ways anticipate the existentialist approach to life in which "the self is an ideal, a chosen course of action and values" (Solomon 243). His discovery of his self, reflected in the sudden shift in his discourse towards first person singular verbal forms and suffixes and in his boast of self-godhood, is commensurate with the existentialist attitude that begins with the individual experiencing itself as "the hero, the megalomaniac...the realization that 'I am the world.'" (Solomon 242). The world that Adam enters as he falls, the world of Lucifer where the soul by itself can be great, finds parallel in the existentialist illusion of self-creation. Milton's Adam recognises that life cannot be self-generated; for his Madáchian counterpart, as well as for the existentialist, the source of man is man or, to quote Sartre, "man makes himself" (qtd. in Solomon 177). In *The Tragedy of Man* it is through his own efforts and through his assimilation of the qualities of intellect and sensibility that Adam grows. Like Kierkegaard's "existing individual" (Copleston 348), Adam is in a constant process of becoming.

But the correlation between the existentialist attitude as developed during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the philosophical position conveyed in *The Tragedy* extends only so far. The most valuable comparison is rather between Madách and his contemporary, Kierkegaard.<sup>2</sup> In many ways both anticipate the more fully developed existentialism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the similarities between the two philosophical positions is worth exploring. In the much-quoted lines from Scene 13, Madách's Adam realises that life is a

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<sup>2</sup> Belohorszky finds that "Kierkegaard és Madách között látunk belső kapcsolatot, filozófiai rokonságot" (886) [between Kierkegaard and Madách we can see an internal connection, a philosophical kinship], and proceeds to examine in some detail the correspondence of Kierkegaard's three phases of self-realisation with Adam's development in *The Tragedy*.

struggle and man's goal is that struggle in itself (3701-2), a sentiment that finds correlation in Kierkegaard's belief that "existence itself, the act of existing, is a striving ... (and) the striving is infinite" (Copleston 348). Adam understands that it is the paradox of human existence as the "divine spark kneaded into mud" that generates that struggle. Kierkegaard defines existence as "that child that is born of the infinite and the finite, the eternal and the temporal, and is therefore a constant striving" (Copleston 348). But the critical congruency between the two, and that which differentiates them from later existentialist thought, is the ultimate necessity for the self to return to the divine.

The third and final stage of self-realisation in the Kierkegaardian dialectic comprises the decision, through faith, to relate the self to a being who lies beyond the reach of speculative philosophy (Copleston 345). Similarly, Madách's Adam only begins to discover himself outside the context of a relationship with God. In the final scene of *The Tragedy*, he chooses to return to the idea of God that he had rejected in the Fall and accept a reality beyond the horizons of the self. It is a mistake to read his identification of struggle as the goal of human life without reference to this later decision, for his choice to return to God qualifies his philosophy of life. Realising that all struggle is meaningless outside a relationship with God, he relocates the boundaries of that struggle: "Uram, legyőztél. Ím a porban vagyok / Nélküled, ellened hiába vívok" (4002-3) [Lord, you win. Here I am in the dust / Without you, against you I strive in vain]. The admission comprises his delayed response to God's challenge in Scene 2, "see what you can achieve on your own" (335), and from this perspective the entire action of the dream sequence becomes parenthetical, an extended hiatus between two lines of the dialogue between God and man. The self-godhood that Adam proclaimed in Scene 3 has proved impotent and all his attempts to arrive at an ideal that is not corrupted through being realised historically have failed. Only by returning to a relationship with the divine can he hope to discover the meaning of his endless existential striving.

Curiously, Madách's God denies Adam the possibility of deriving a sense of direction and purpose from this relating of himself to the divine, despite Adam's clearly articulated desire for further knowledge. Adam shares this desire, too, with Kierkegaard: "The important thing is to understand what I am destined for, to perceive what the Deity wants me to do; the point is to find the truth which is truth for me, to find that idea for which I am ready to live and die" (*Journals* § 22, qtd. in Kaufmann 189). Adam had hoped to find such an ideal without reference to the Deity, and ultimately God does nothing more

than confirm the role of the ideal that Adam himself formulated in Scene 13, when he recognised that “However wretched / My ideal, still it inspired me, / Raised me up, and so proved great and holy” (3715-16). God even reinforces the existentialist ethic of striving: “Your arms are strong, your heart is noble: / Endless the field that summons you to work” (4072-73). And yet this final stage was necessary: Adam must strive with God rather than without him.

This ultimate understanding is not the “paradise within” that Milton’s Adam experiences. For the Adam of *Paradise Lost*, attaining the “sum of wisdom” is not unrealistic. He reaches this point before the end of the epic and it is precisely because he has that he must strive: man must “add / Deeds” because he has come to know (XII 581-82). The Adam of *The Tragedy* arrives only at the possibility of understanding, the possibility of knowledge amid a world of uncertainty. But this knowledge is limited. In the resolution imposed by God, knowing what lies beyond transient human experience is impossible and man’s inability to access the “secret that the hand of God has kindly veiled” is what elevates and ennoble his struggles towards an ideal. In an inversion of the resolution of *Paradise Lost*, man must strive because he does *not* know.

The positive outcome of epic is not merely a literary convention. When Milton asserted that the end of all learning is “to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright” (*Works* II 366-67), he was not imposing an impossible imperative upon educational endeavour but one which, if idealistic, was yet attainable. For Milton, God was essentially knowable. He was visible in the created world and specifically in man himself, and the self-seeking soul would inevitably be directed by its own efforts to discover God. For Milton’s Adam, too, learning to “know God aright” is an achievable goal. The opportunities afforded in the prelapsarian state enable him to construct a sound understanding of the relationship between himself and God and although he falls out of self-knowledge into misunderstanding, failing to know himself aright, he is prompted to relearn, repairing the ruins of his former knowledge and arriving at a reformulation of his relationship with the divine. Nor is the outcome of *The Tragedy* merely formulaic. In his poem “Hit és tudás,” considering the loss of the original harmony in which God and man lived together, Madách writes, “a nagy űrt tán át sem tudja szállni, / Isten gondja és emberremények” [perhaps not even God’s care and human hopes / Can reach and touch across the vast chasm]. In *The Tragedy*, he allows the hope – or at least the hope of hope – that the relationship can be renewed, although Adam’s final words reflect perhaps a

greater measure of despair. Traditionally, the Fall involves division: man is separated from God, the creature from the creator, and good is separated by definition and experience from evil. In both *The Tragedy of Man* and *Paradise Lost* resolution is reached only in the healing of that dislocation. But where for Milton “regaining to know God aright” is the impulse that underlies all learning, for Madách even the possibility of restoration is doubtful and certain knowledge is an impossibility; man is not to inquire further into “the secret that the hand of God / Has kindly veiled from your longing sight” (4043-44).

In Genesis, Eve sees that the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge is “to be desired to make one wise” (Gen 3:6). The Biblical story of the Fall cannot be separated from a human fascination with knowledge and a desire to understand that fascination by objectifying it. Implicit to both Milton’s and Madách’s utilisation of the story is a re-exploration of the relationship between knowledge and falling. This attempt to discover answers to the fundamental questions of human existence and human capacity for knowledge creates common ground that underlies the apparent and at times distracting differences between their work. The desire to know remains a constant through the vagaries of human development, but the approach to knowledge taken by different generations shifts, drawing the story of the Fall away from its original context of religious mythology into the realms of anthropocentric philosophy. *Paradise Lost* and *The Tragedy of Man* exist in a continuum that reflects the ongoing effect of changing philosophical outlooks upon the imperative to “know thyself.”

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